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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST,

FROM THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES, TO THE YEAR 1551,

ABRIDGED

FROM THE FIVE FIRST VOLUMES OF

MILNER'S CHURCH HISTORY.

BY REV. JESSE TOWNSEND, A. B.

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UTICA:

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1816.

Northern District of New York, to wit:

Be it remembered, that on the fifteenth day of February, in the fortieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Talcott Camp, Ira Merrell & George Camp, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"The History of the Church of Christ, from the days of the Apostles, to the year 1551, abridged from the five first volumes of Milner's Church History. By Rev. Jesse Townsend, A. B."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned," and also to an act entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.

RICHARD R. LANSING, *Clerk*
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TO THE PUBLIC.

The publishers are bound to offer an apology for some delay in the publication of the Abridgment of Milner. The only one they can offer is, that the occurrence of events unforeseen and uncontrollable by them, has rendered ineffectual their strenuous exertions to ensure its earlier appearance.

While they regret the necessity of any excuse, they trust, this, in the estimation of the candid and generous, will be sufficient.

Histories of the church have always been regarded as most interesting and valuable works. The multitude of marvellous events that have happened to it, its vicissitudes, its dangers and sufferings, its disasters and successes, its miraculous preservation and progress, cannot fail to excite the wonder and admiration of mankind, the poignant regret and grief of its enemies, the lively joy and gratitude of its friends.—To become acquainted with these facts must be an object of peculiar and earnest desire with all true believers in christianity. The size and expense of general histories of the church, have locked up their abundant treasures from many readers whose piety made them especially anxious to acquire a portion of those exhaustless riches.

In this Abridgment, it has been a principal object to retain the material and most interesting facts, that the value of the original work might be preserved, and the price and size so reduced that the former should not surpass the ability of those who are desirous to purchase, and the latter not require more time and attention in perusal than they can easily bestow. These objects they hope will be fully accomplished, and the work in its present form prove extensively useful. That it may be satisfactory to the public, and beneficial to the interests of religion, is the sincere desire of

THE PUBLISHERS.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

I have examined Townsend's Abridgment, and in my opinion, it is executed in such a manner, as will render it an acceptable and useful work to the public.

HENRY DWIGHT, *Pastor*
of first Presbyterian Church Utica, N. Y.

From my acquaintance with the Rev. Mr. Dwight, I most cheerfully give my name, if it will aid in the more general diffusion of the Abridgment of Milner's Church History.

AZEL BACKUS, D. D.
President of Hamilton College.

I have examined a part of *Townsend's Abridgment*, and cheerfully concur in opinion with the Rev. Mr. Dwight and Doctor Backus, expressed in the above recommendations.

ASAHEL S. NORTON, D. D.
Pastor of the first Congregational Church, Clinton N. Y.

PREFACE.

THIS Abridgment of MILNER'S CHURCH HISTORY, is designed for the use and benefit of such families as may not feel themselves able to purchase, or may not have time to read the entire work.

THE principal facts there detailed, are here presented to the public in a condensed form, mostly in the language of the author.

THE progress of truth and its salutary influence on a world ruined by sin; the consolations which result from a life of true holiness, and the faithfulness of Zion's King in the means used to support his cause in the world, are here exhibited. The saints are seen in sackcloth, with their hearts fixed, trusting in God: errors in their various forms and deleterious nature, are noticed, and the blood of the martyrs is seen to be the seed of the church.

MAY all, who shall read this abridgment, be excited, by the Holy Spirit, to live to the glory of Him, who has said to his church; "FEAR NOT, LITTLE FLOCK, IT IS YOUR FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM."

J. T.

Utica, Feb. 10, 1816.

CENTURY I.

CHAPTER I.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CHURCH, SO FOR AS IT MAY BE COLLECTED FROM THE SCRIPTURE.

SECTION I.

Jerusalem.

THAT "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Jesus Christ, beginning at Jerusalem;" is a text which shows what the christian religion is, and where we are to look for its commencement. We are to describe the rise of a dispensation, the most glorious to God, and the most beneficent to man. In Judea alone something of the worship of the true God, and of the forms of the Mosaic economy subsisted, but greatly obscured and corrupted with Pharisaic traditions, and Sadducean profaneness. Of that religion, which consists in repentance and remission of sins, they were totally ignorant. The great body of the Jewish nation knew not that men need to be made new creatures, and to receive the forgiveness of sins by faith in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Some there were, however, who implicitly rested on the God of Israel, and trusted in the Redeemer that was to come; such were Zacharias, Simeon and Anna.

This dark season was chosen by Him "who hath put the times and seasons in his own power," for the exhibition of the Light of Life.

But few souls were converted during Christ's abode on earth. The five hundred brethren, who all saw him at one time, after his resurrection, seem to have been the sum total of his disciples.

The first Christian Church was erected at Jerusalem. As repentance and remission of sins were the leading doctrines of Christ's religion, the most ample room had been made for them by the completion of his redemption. He had offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, "was risen" from the dead "for our justification," and in the sight of his disciples had just ascended up to heaven. That the gospel, the good news of reconciliation to God, for penitent sinners, should begin at Jerusalem, the scene of so much wickedness perpetrated, and of so much grace abused, evinced the Divine goodness, and displayed the grand purposes of the gospel to be, to justify the ungodly, and to quicken the dead.

By command from their Divine Master, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, in mutual charity, and in the fervent exercise of prayer and supplication. During this interesting crisis, they elected Matthias to fill the place from which Judas by transgression fell.

The day of Penticost was the era of the Divine visitation. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. By this they were prepared to propagate the gospel; and this was an attestation of its truth. Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, then dwelling at Jerusalem, with amazement, heard these Gallileans speak, each in his own language. But some derided the apostles as intoxicated with new wine. The zeal of Peter was now excited to preach both to those who admired and to those who scoffed. The design of his sermon was to beget a conviction of sin in his hearers, and to bring them to look to Jesus, through whom alone salvation is exhibited to sinful men. It pleased God to crown his preaching with success. Multitudes were pricked in their hearts, found themselves guilty of having murdered the Christ of God, and anxious to know what they should do. Peter's direction to them was; "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Thus the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus, began at Jerusalem.

They, who gladly received the word which Peter preached, were baptized, "and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." These appear to have been fully converted to Christianity; for we are assured, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Here we see the regular appearance of the first christian church. A church that understood and believed the apostolic doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ. A church that continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. They regarded their pastors as those whom God had made instruments of their conversion. They manifested their faith by their obedience to the command of Christ relative to the Lord's supper, and were devout and prayerful.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Mutual charity proved how soon the operations of Divine grace had loosened their affections from a love of this world, and that they had chosen God for their portion. This was a happy season of religious revival, for "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Soon after this, a miracle, wrought by Peter and John, on a lame man, a well known beggar, above forty years old, gave a further attestation to their doctrine; and prepared the way for Peter to preach to the admiring multitudes the same doctrine of repentance and remission, and to point them to Jesus for pardon and salvation. In this St. Peter exalts the Lord Jesus as the Holy One, and the Just, the Prince of Life; shows them their guilt in their having preferred Barrabas, a murderer, to him, disclaims all merit in himself and his colleague in the miracle just wrought, and shews that God had glorified his Son Jesus, and that it was through faith in his name, the wonderful cure had been performed; exhorts them to repentance and conversion, and shows them that "there is none other name" than that of Jesus "under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

The signal for persecution was now raised by the magistrates of Jerusalem, who were enemies to all practical godliness. The two apostles were imprisoned that evening; but their examination was deferred until the next day.

To the interrogatories put to him by the court of examination, Peter frankly answers, that the miracle had been "wrought in the name of Jesus, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," and boldly rebukes them for their contempt of him, who is the only Savior. The wisdom and boldness, of these two unlettered fishermen, struck the court with astonishment. But finding no present opportunity to gratify their malice, on account of the splendor of the miracle, they dismissed them with a strict charge to be silent in future concerning the name of Jesus. With this charge the apostles ingenuously confessed they could not comply, because they must obey God rather than men.

The apostles returning and reporting all these things to their company, they all with united supplication entreated the Lord to grant them boldness to persevere, notwithstanding the menaces of his and their enemies. They were filled with the Holy Ghost and enabled to proceed with calm intrepidity.

At this season, brotherly love and the most perfect unanimity happily prevailed among the christians. Divine grace was largely diffused among them. The poor lacked nothing; the richer brethren converted their possessions into money, and left the distribution of the whole to the discretion of the apostles. But the wheat among the tares now began to appear. There was one Ananias among the disciples, whose conscience had been so far impressed, as to respect that doctrine and fellowship to which he had joined himself; but whose heart was never divorced from the love of the world. A regard for his reputation induced him to sell his possessions with the rest; but the fear of poverty and the want of faith in God, disposed him to reserve a part of the price, while he brought the other to the apostles. Peter upbraided him with being under the influence of Satan, in lying to the Holy Ghost; shewed him that the action was not committed against man, but against God, that the guilt of his hypocrisy was hereby aggravated; that he was under no necessity of selling his property, or of laying it at the apostles' feet when sold, and that nothing could be said to extenuate his baseness. Immediately the unhappy man fell down dead; and about three hours after, his wife Sapphira, who had been partaker of her husband's guilt, was made a similar monument of Divine justice.

Such a proof of the discernment of spirits, and of the power of punishing hypocrisy, resting in the governors of the church, filled all who heard these things with awe. The Lord had now shewn his holiness as well as his grace: and the love of the world, was a second time punished by a signal interposition of heaven. Multitudes of both sexes were now added to the church, chiefly of the common people.

At the progress which the gospel was thus making, the rage of the high priest and his party, all of whom were of the sect of the Sadducees, was greatly excited. Their first step was to imprison the apostles. But God by night, sent his angel and set them free, and bade them preach in the temple. The next morning, a full Sanhedrim was convened, and the apostles were sent for. They were not, however, found in confinement, but preaching in the temple, and in a gentle manner were conducted before the court. The high priest upbraids them with their disobedience to his former injunction of silence, to whom they again answer, "they ought to obey God rather than men." They bore witness to the resurrection of Christ, and declared that "God had exalted him with his own right hand to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," and that "the Holy Ghost, whom God bestows on those who obey him, witnessed" the same thing. Thus these first christians did, with the most pungent plainness, lay open the gospel, and exhibit it as something extremely different from a mere system of morals, though it included all good morality in its nature.

The spirit of persecution was now about to burst forth in violent counsels. But Providence made use of the counsel of Gamaliel, a judicious, learned, respectable man, though as far as appears, a man of the world, and a hater of christianity, to prolong the lives of the apostles. They were dismissed, but not without stripes, and a severe charge no more to preach in the name of Jesus. They ceased not, however, to "teach and preach Jesus Christ, and rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

The church was now much enlarged; an increase of ministerial labor devolved upon the apostles: dissatisfaction in the mean time arose in the minds of some, from a supposition that, in the daily supply of the poor, relief had not, by the apostles, been equally ministered to the widows. Seven coadjutors were chosen to see to an equal ministration to the poor, and the apostles were left free to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. The love of Christ then ruling in the hearts of his people, the multitude consented with pleasure. Many of the priests now obeyed the gospel, and Jerusalem saw continually large accessions made to the church.

The enemies of Christianity could not be at rest. Stèphen, one of the seven who had been chosen to assist the apostles, in relieving them from the daily ministration to the poor, a man most distinguished for his piety, was accused of blasphemy against Moses and against God; and brought to make his defence before the Sanhedrim. In his defence, he boldly rebuked the Jews and labored to bring his audience to a deep conviction of their sin in having been the murderers of the Prince of Life, and to leave them no hope in their own righteousness. Behold the contrast between the spirit of the world and the spirit of true christianity! His enemies "were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth." He, "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and what he saw, he openly confessed. Their malice burst into a flame. "They cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him," while he called upon his Divine Master, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And having thus shewn the constancy of his faith, and the ardor of his benevolence, "he fell asleep." Real faith in Christ, and real charity to men, were here a glorious exemplification of the true spirit of christianity. Stephen was buried with great lamentation by the church, and a considerable number soon after suffered.

The spirit of persecution now raged with unrelenting fury. Saul of Tarsus, a young man of an active, ambitious spirit, educated at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, and pre-eminently versed in Judaical learning, distinguished himself as a most bitter persecutor. He took care of the clothes of the witnesses employed in stoning Stephen, and made havoc of the church, entering into every house, "and haling men and women, committed them to prison, and when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them." In truth the disciples seemed now to be left to the rage of men, disposed to shew them no mercy, and a superficial observer might have supposed, that the fate of Theudas and Judas, mentioned by Gamaliel, was going to attend the christians. Men had not yet learned that the "blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church."

The religious worship of the disciples must have suffered a grievous interruption. They were all in a perilous condition. The apostles alone stood their ground, and by the watchful care of their God, were preserved. The dispersed christians preached the word wherever they went. And thus this persecution was the first occasion of the diffusion of the gospel through various regions, and what was designed to annihilate it, was overruled to extend it exceedingly. But we shall confine ourselves in this section to the church of Jerusalem.

Saul, zealous for persecution, was vexed to hear, that a number of the christians had escaped to Damascus, an ancient city of Syria, and procured a commission from the high priest to bring them bound to Jerusalem. On his way, when near to Damascus, a sudden light from heaven, exceeding that of the sun, arrested the daring zealot, and struck him to the ground. At the same time, a voice called to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he said, Who art thou, Lord; and the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The will of this bitter persecutor was broken for the first time, and, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do," was his cry.

He was directed to go into Damascus, where, after having remained three days without sight and without food, by the particular direction of a vision from the Lord Jesus, Ananias, a disciple of Damascus, was sent to him with the tidings of peace. He received his sight and was filled with the Holy Ghost, was baptized, and soon refreshed both in mind and body. From that time till his death, he was engaged in the service of Jesus Christ, in a course of labors in the church, with unparalleled success. This is he who is commonly known by the name of St. Paul, and his memorial is blessed forever. Particularly commissioned to preach to the Gentiles, he entered with the greatest penetration into the nature of christianity, became one of its most able advocates and zealous supporters, and travelled extensively for its propagation. Having preached Christ for three years abroad, he went up to Jerusalem, not to join himself to his former friends in persecution, but to join himself to the church. The church, after receiving particular information of his genuine conversion, received him cordially. Gladly would he have remained at Jerusalem; but the Lord by a vision assured him that the Jews would not receive his testimony, and that the great scene of his labors was to be among the Gentiles.

The unconverted Jews sought his life, but by the address of his christian brethren, he was safely conducted to his native city of Tarsus. The fury of persecution now subsided, the Lord gave rest to his church and the disciples, both at Jerusalem and elsewhere, "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Where these are united, excesses of all sorts are prevented, and inward joy and outward obedience demonstrate that there Christ reigns indeed. Yet so slow are men to receive new divine truths, especially those which militate against old prejudices, that the christians of Jerusalem contended with Peter on account of his intercourse with the Gentiles of Cæsarea. Peter with great meekness reasoned with his bigoted brethren, convinced them by evident proofs that the grace of God was vouchsafed to the Gentiles, and that it was lawful to have communion with them. They glorified God, saying, "Then hath God, also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life." Even a converted Jew, now admits with difficulty, that the grace of God may visit a Gentile.

The visits of Paul to Jerusalem seem to have been but short. In one of these the grace of God shone bright, in the alms of Gentile converts sent by him to the Jewish christians afflicted with a famine in the days of Claudius Cæsar. His companion to Jerusalem was Barnabas, whose liberality in the beginning had been so eminent. Having discharged this service, they both returned to minister to the Gentiles.

The civil power of Judea was now in the hands of Herod Agrippa, a person of considerable talents, and full of specious virtue, but a persecutor of the church of Christ. Of this persecution, James, the son Zebedee, was the first victim; who was slain with the sword, the first of the apostles, who departed from the church below, to join that which is above.

Herod, finding this act popular, sought to despatch Peter also. But God had reserved him for more services. Though imprisoned and strictly guarded, with a view to his being publicly executed, after the passover, when the concourse of Jews at Jerusalem was very large, yet was he miraculously preserved.

A spirit of earnest, persevering prayer, on his behalf was poured on the church of Jerusalem, and on the night before his intended execution, an angel was sent for his deliverance from prison. He then gladly repaired to his praying christian friends, who received him with great joy, and he informed them of the Lord's wonderful interposition in his favor. After this he retired to a place of concealment.

Little did Herod apprehend that his own death should precede that of his prisoner. On a public occasion, in which he appeared in great splendor, he delivered an oration, so pleasing to his audience, "that they shouted, it is the voice of a god and not of a man." That moment he was smitten with an incurable disease by an angel, because he "gave not God the glory." Thus he fell, a warning to princes not to seek glory in opposition to God.

The next memorable circumstance in the mother church was "the first christian council." The many thousands, in whose hearts God had erected his kingdom, though in the midst of one of the most wicked nations in the world, had now lived about twenty years, in great unanimity and charity, "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But at length their peace and harmony were interrupted by some christian Jews, who urged upon the Gentile converts the necessity of circumcision, and of obedience to the whole of the Mosaic ceremonial, in order to salvation. In this they practically averred, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, was not sufficient for man's salvation, that the favor of God was, in part at least, to be purchased by human works, and that they by their ritual observances contributed to their acceptance with God. In this an attempt was made to corrupt the simplicity of the faith, by which christians had hitherto rested with complacency on Jesus alone, had enjoyed peace of conscience, and been constrained to obedience by love. This growing evil, the apostles Paul and Barnabas, after no small fruitless altercation with the zealots, sought to counteract, by referring the full consideration of the question to a council of apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

At the council Peter argued, that as God had selected him to preach to the Gentiles, and had given great success to his preaching among them, in purifying their hearts by faith, and in shedding down upon them the Holy Ghost, no less than upon the Jews, God had unequivocally decided, that the yoke of ceremonial observances was not to be imposed on them, as necessary to their salvation. Paul and Barnabas also gave full proof of the divine grace vouchsafed to the Gentiles. James, who seems to have been the standing pastor of Jerusalem, confirmed the same argument, by the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeably to Peter's declaration of the mercy of God in visiting the Gentiles. He gave his opinion, that the Gentiles should no longer be molested with sentiments subversive of the grace of God, and tending to teach them dependance on human works, instead of the merits of Christ for salvation. Only he recommended, that the council should direct them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For the Jews, dispersed through Gentile cities, and who heard Moses read every Sabbath day, required these precautions.

A letter was sent according to these views, nor does it appear there was one dissenting voice in the council. The result of this council among the Gentile converts, appears to have had a most salutary effect.

The tenor of this result was, that none were required to live in Mosaic observances, as necessary to salvation: that dependance for salvation was to be placed, solely on the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ. From the Acts of the apostles, and from their epistles it appears, that they regulated their religious instructions and practices agreeably to this prudent and excellent result, whereever they went. The inveteracy and self-righteous spirit of those who adhered to Mosaic observances, their opposition to the soul-humbling, apostolic doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the zeal, faithfulness and success of the apostles, we have stated in the Acts of the apostles, and in their epistles. To these the reader is referred for particular information. From the same source we learn too that the church at Jerusalem did not uniformly maintain its first love, but even in the apostles' day experienced a season of declension.

SECTION II.

Judea, Galilee and Samaria.

THE holy land was divided into three provinces, Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. In all these, christian churches were early planted. These, most probably, followed the example of the parent church at Jerusalem, both in its first love and auspicious progress, and also in its unhappy declension.

Samaria, though situated between Judea and Galilee, was distinguished from them both in its polity and religion. Its inhabitants occupied a great part of the district which had belonged to the tribes, whom the kings of Assyria had carried into captivity.—They mixed the worship of Jehovah with their idols, vainly boasted of their relation to Jacob, professed to regard the law of Moses, and depreciated the rest of the Old Testament.

They were extremely corrupted in their religious views and practices.

This people the divine Savior pitied, and visited them himself, when some sinners were converted. But the effusions of his kindness toward this unhappy people appeared most conspicuous, in blessing the ministry of Philip to their spiritual good. Philip, one of the eleven, spoken of in the sixth chapter of Acts, driven from Jerusalem by persecution, was directed to go to Samaria. There he preached Christ, and the gospel entered the hearts of many, so that "there was great joy in that city." Though the inhabitants were a simple and ignorant people, yet when the spirit of God was greatly poured out upon them, under Philip's preaching, none received the gospel with more cordial pleasure. Superstition and diabolical delusions vanished; and numbers of both sexes were baptized.

Simon, the sorcerer, who had for a long time deceived this people with his sorceries, though a stranger to the nature and power of Christ's religion, was convinced that christianity in general was true, became an historical believer and was baptized.

The apostles, hearing of the happy success of the gospel at Samaria, sent thither Peter and John, who prayed that the Holy Ghost might be imparted through the imposition of hands. Their prayer was answered. The Spirit was communicated, not only in extraordinary gifts, but also in an effusion of the same holy graces, which had appeared in Judea.— By the former the attention of Simon was attracted. His avarice prompted him to attempt to purchase the power with money; in expectation that if possessed of the supposed secret, he could soon acquire vast wealth. Peter, who at once saw his covetousness and ignorance, rebuking him in the severest manner, assured him his heart was altogether wrong, and that notwithstanding his baptism and profession of christianity, his state was accursed, and exhorted him to repent and to seek divine forgiveness. Here we see how singularly remote the religion of Jesus is from all worldly plans and schemes, and what an awful difference there ever is between a real and nominal christian. The conscience of Simon felt the reproof: he begged the apostle's prayers, but it does not appear he ever prayed for himself.

Peter and John preached through many Samaritan villages, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Thus, converted Jews and converted Samaritans, who, while unregenerated, had disagreed in rites, were now united in Jesus, and while each felt the same obligations to grace, learnt for the first time the sweets and comforts of mutual charity.

SECTION III.

Ethiopia.

THE persecution which had driven many of the real friends of Christ from Jerusalem, was overruled to the furtherance of the gospel. After Philip had finished his work at Samaria, he was, by an extraordinary commission, ordered to travel southward toward the desert. He soon learnt for what intent; he fell in with an Ethiopian eunuch, a minister of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had been worshipping at Jerusalem, and was returning home in his chariot, and reading the prophet Esaias. The adorable providence of God directed him, at that particular time, to the fifty-third chapter, which gives so clear a description of Christ crucified. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. The man, confessing his ignorance, desired Philip to come and sit with him. The evangelist took the opportunity of expounding the gospel to him through the medium of the passage he was then reading, which at once lays open the guilty and miserable state of man, his recovery only by the grace of Jesus Christ, the nature, end and efficacy of his death and resurrection, and justification before God, by the knowledge of him. God gave efficacy to the truths explained, brought him to see and feel his guilt and wickedness, to discover the remedy provided for divine acceptance, and as soon as he came to a certain water, he desired to be baptized. Philip, assuring him there was no impediment, if he was sincere in the faith of Christ, the humbled applicant professed that he believed that the Jesus of Nazareth, whom Philip had preached to him, was indeed the Son of God prophesied of in Isaiah, and answered the character of Savior there given him. Philip then baptized him.

Though Philip, by the spirit of the Lord, was immediately taken from him, yet he went on his way, to his own country rejoicing. This joy, had doubtless, a solid and powerful cause, arising from a spiritual, internal work, humbling him for sin, and comforting him, in a view of the truths which he had just heard explained, with forgiveness by Christ. The Eunuch, thus enlightened and rejoicing in God, when he returned home, did probably use his influence to plant the gospel among his own countrymen. We have, however, no scripture light on this subject.

SECTION IV.

Cæsarea.

CÆSAREA, situated in the confines of Syria and Judea, was the residence of the Roman Governor, a city of great importance.

Philip, after he was caught away from the Eunuch, was found at Azotus: "and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea." Here he was stationary many years. Toward the conclusion of the period of about thirty years, which takes in the history of the Acts, we find him still fixed in the same place, with four virgin daughters, where he entertained St. Paul in his last journey to Jerusalem. Here we may well suppose he did not spend his time in idleness and inactivity, but with zeal and engagedness for the good of souls.

In this city the grace of God was displayed in the conversion of Cornelius; the history of whom, and the method taken by the grace of God for his instruction, and the spiritual good of other Gentiles in that city, the reader may see at large in Acts, tenth chapter. In these instances of Gentile conversion, christian Jews were taught that Jesus had a chosen people among the Gentiles, whom he had come to seek and to save, and that Gentile converts were to be by them received as fellow-heirs of the grace of God.

SECTION V.

Antioch and some other Asiatic Churches.

THE good effects which Providence brought out of Stephen's persecution were great. Many, who fled from persecution, disseminated the gospel in Gentile regions. Some travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch, still preaching only to Jews. At length, some Cypriot and Cyrenian Jews ventured to break through the pale of distinction, and at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, preached the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles. These were called Grecians, because the Greek language here prevailed. The Lord, willing to overcome effectually the reluctances of self-righteous bigotry, caused the idolaters to feel the sanctifying power of divine grace accompanying the gospel, and great numbers to turn to him. The mother church, hearing of this, sent Barnabas, whose piety and charity were renowned, to carry on and propagate a work, which required more labourers. Salvation, by the grace of Christ, thus exemplified on persons, whose lives had hitherto been involved in Paganism, and evidenced in a manner hitherto unknown, cheered the benevolent heart of this devout missionary: with a most pleasing prospect of usefulness. Finding many converts, he exhorted them to perseverance, and the addition of believers was still so large, that he began to look out for a coadjutor. He sought for Saul, then laboring at Tarsus, perhaps with no great success; "for a prophet is not honored in his own country," and brought him to Antioch. This populous city employed them a whole year. Christian societies, consisting in a great measure of Gentiles, were here regularly formed. And here the followers of Christ were first called christians. A name given them, probably, by their adversaries, by way of contempt. But a name now honorable to all who maintain the real character of disciples of their divine Master.

That the faith of the christians of Antioch was signally operative, and that they rejoiced in the prospect of heavenly treasures, they manifested by contributing cheerfully to the relief of their poor brethren of Jerusalem distressed by a famine. The Holy Ghost now called Barnabas and Saul to other labors; and Seleucia, in the neighborhood, was their first destination. Thence they passed to the fertile and pleasant island of Cyprus.

From Salamis, the eastern point of the island, to Paphos the western, they spread the glad tidings of the gospel. In this last place they found Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, with Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the island. The governor being a man of sense and candor, sent for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. The good effects of their labors, the sorcerer endeavored to prevent; till Paul, full of holy indignation at his diabolical malice, was enabled miraculously to strike him blind for a season. Sergius was astonished "at the doctrine of the Lord," and commenced a christian from that hour.

The two apostles sailed now to the adjoining continent, and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. John Mark, who had thus far attended them as minister, here left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Antioch in Pisidia was the next scene of their labors. There, on the Sabbath day, they attended the Jewish synagogue, and Paul, having been invited by the rulers to give a word of exhortation, addressed the audience with such instructions as tended to beget in them a conviction of sinfulness, and to give testimony to Jesus, concluding with a remarkably plain declaration of the grand doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus only, and a solemn warning against the dreadful consequences of hardness of heart, and of contempt of the divine message. The Gentiles, powerfully impressed with the news, desired to hear more of the subject the next Sabbath. Many Jews and proselytes were converted; and almost the whole city came next Sabbath to hear. The envy of the infidel Jews was hereby excited against Paul, and was manifested in most decided and virulent opposition. The two apostles boldly assured them, that though it was their duty to carry the news of salvation to them first, yet as they despised God's gift of eternal life, they would now turn to the Gentiles. The Pagans, feeling that they had no righteousness to plead before God, thankfully embraced the gospel, and believed, in great numbers.

In Pisidia the apostles proceeded with vast success, till a persecution stirred up by the Jews, induced some self-righteous ladies, in conjunction with the magistrates, to drive them out of their coasts. And they came to Iconium, the northern extremity of the country. The disciples whom they left, though harrassed with persecution, "were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." The ministry of these two apostles at Iconium, where they continued a long time, was blessed to the conversion of a great multitude both of Jews and Gentiles. The unbelieving Jews, who were Unitarians in sentiment, exerted their usual malevolence and filled the Gentiles with the strongest prejudices against the Christians. They labored, notwithstanding all their knowledge of the law of Moses and the prophets, to prevent their Pagan neighbors from being instructed in any thing which deserved the name of religion, and persecuted with unceasing acrimony two of their own countrymen, who agreed with them in the profession of the worship of the one living and true God. They evidently preferred to have their Pagan neighbors remain buried in the depths of the most senseless idolatry in worship, and of vicious profligacy of life, rather than to have them brought over to the real christian religion, the hearty renunciation of their own righteousness, and an humble dependance on the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ. In this they exhibited the practical nature of real Unitarianism, as it stands unconnected with the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. In this city, the preaching of Paul and Barnabas excited a variety of speculations. The Gentiles were divided, and part ranged themselves with the Jews, and part with the apostles. The former, for the present, had the advantage, because they had the arms of violence and persecution, which christian soldiers cannot use.

The apostles aware of their designs, "fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and into the region that lieth round about: and there they preached the gospel." At Lystra, a poor cripple, who never had the use of his feet, with the most respectful attention heard Paul preach, and was brought to believe there was virtue in the name of Jesus Christ to heal him. To confirm him in his infant views of the christian religion, to attest the truth, and to convince men that Jesus was both mighty and benevolent, Paul was enabled by a word to restore the man to the full use of his limbs. Immediately these poor idolaters concluded, that the gods were come down to them in the likeness of men. Through this whole country of Asia Minor, the Greek Literature, and with it the numerous fables of Hellenistic vanity, abounded. They had heard of Jupiter and Mercury, particularly as visiting mankind; and now Barnabas, whose figure of the two was the most majestic, must be Jupiter, and Paul, as the more eloquent speaker, must be Mercury, the classical God of eloquence. The priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. It was a grievous circumstance; but an opportunity was hereby given to the apostles to demonstrate the Spirit of real godliness. The humble teachers of the gospel, rent their clothes, ran in among the people, and expostulating with them on the absurdity of their conduct, assured them they were no more than men like themselves, and that the object of their preaching to them was, to turn them from their idolatrous practices, to the worship of the living God, the maker of heaven and earth. Thus faithfully did they preach conviction of sin to the Lycaonians, and with difficulty prevented the actual performance of the sacrifice, which would have given them more pain than the persecution which followed.

Jews, who came from Antioch and Iconium, soon persuaded the fickle multitude to harbor the worst opinion of Paul and Barnabas, and to persecute them. In a tumult Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city, as dead; but while the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, miraculously restored, and came into the city, and next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe. There many were converted, and the persecuting spirit intermitting, they visited again, in circuit the regions of Pisidia, and Lycaonia, encouraging the disciples to persevere in the faith of Jesus in confidence of divine support, and in full expectation of the kingdom of heaven, into which real christians must not expect to enter without much tribulation.

Having ordained some of the brethren to minister in every church, and having solemnly recommended pastors and flocks to the care of that gracious Lord, on whom they had believed, they returned through Pamphylia, preached again at Perga, and from Attalia sailed to the great Antioch, whence they had been, by the prayers of the church, recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. The christians of Antioch now rested on Christ alone, and manifested their faith and love by acts of filial obedience. Here Paul and Barnabas spent some time, and were instrumental of great consolation to their christian brethren; afterward they were about to visit again the Asiatic churches. Barnabas proposed to take Mark with them, but Paul, remembering his former desertion, thought him unfit for the work. The consequence was Paul and Barnabas separated; Barnabas with Mark sailed to Cyprus. Paul took Silas for his fellow laborer, and went through Syria and Silicia confirming the churches.

In Lycaonia he found the pious Timothy, whom he took as an associate, and confirmed the Gentile converts every where in christian liberty: thus were the churches established in the faith, and daily increased in number.

SECTION VI.

Galatia.

IN this country the grossest idolatry had reigned; but here the grace of God accompanying the ministry of Paul among them had a wonderful effect, to turn great numbers of vile idolaters from their vanities to the love of the truth in Jesus Christ. And several churches were planted among them, formed almost, if not entirely, of Gentiles. These understood and received the apostolic doctrine, that justification is attainable only by faith in Christ crucified. They received the spirit of adoption, by which they rejoiced in God as their Father, and cheerfully suffered much persecution for the name of Christ. But on Paul's leaving them, with the most pleasing hopes of their spiritual growth and steadfastness in the great doctrines which he had taught them, certain Judaizing teachers sought to pervert them from the simplicity of the gospel way of life and salvation by faith in Christ's name, by urging upon them circumcision and various other Mosaic rites, as necessary to their salvation. These teachers endeavored to alienate the affections of the Gentile converts of Galatia from Paul, and to foster among them a self-righteous spirit, by endeavoring to bring them not to depend on Christ alone for salvation. Paul having learned what was taking place at Galatia in his absence, addressed to them a very plain and affectionate letter, in which he warns them of their danger from Judaizing teachers, and asserts that if they mixed circumcision, or any work of the law, with Christ, in the article of justification, Christ would be of no effect to them; that Christ must be their whole Savior, if they were saved by him; law and grace in this case being quite opposite. He urges that the doctrine they were embracing would but foster a self-righteous spirit, void of love to God and man, and make them no better, in their spiritual state, than they were while idolaters; that if they cherished this spirit, they would not experience the liberty of the gospel, but be mere slaves in religion, still unconverted, and merely self-righteous, and that the gospel is entirely distinct from any thing which mere man is apt to teach or ready to embrace. In the historical part of the epistle, he vindicates his own apostolic character, and with clear argument and strong diction, inculcates the all important article of justification, and presses the necessity of continuing in it, to be benefitted by it. He appeals to their own experience of the happy fruits of the gospel, which they had felt, and represents himself as travailing in birth for them, till Christ be formed in them. From their readiness to listen to Judaizing teachers, he had just reason to be doubtful of their state, and therefore he manifests his great desire to visit them, and give them, in their perilous condition, personal instruction. Their evil advisers were so mischievous to their souls, that he wishes them to be cut off, and assures them that the divine vengeance would overtake them. He informs them that the persecution, which he himself endured, was on account of this very doctrine, which he was defending; that this being lost, the gospel becomes a mere name, and christianity is lost in the group of common religions.

There is reason to hope that the best effects attended this epistle; for in his epistle to the Corinthians we find St. Paul exhorting his brethren of Corinth to use the same plan for the relief of the poor saints, which he had suggested to the Galatians. From this it appears that he still had influence in Galatia, and that the Judaical perversion was overcome.

SECTION VII.

Philippi.

THIS city, though originally Macedonian, and named from Philip the father of Alexander, was then a Roman colony, inhabited by Roman citizens, and regulated by Roman laws and customs. Paul and Silas were determined, in their visit to this city, by a nightly vision, in which there stood a man of Macedonia, before Paul, saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Here, these two apostles spent a few days with little prospect of success. But on the Sabbath they went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made, and sat down, and spake unto the women who resorted thither. One of them was Lydia, a person of some property. Her heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken of Paul. She was baptized, and her household, and with affectionate importunity prevailed on the apostle and his companions to make her house their home in Philippi. Here we have the commencement of the Philippian church. Satan, vexed at the prospect, employed a girl possessed with a spirit of Python, a diabolical spirit, to bring, if possible, the gospel into contempt. She constantly followed the christian preachers, and bore them the most honorable testimony, "saying, these men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Paul was grieved, being fully sensible of the ill effect, which a supposed union between Christ and Python must occasion in the minds of men; and was enabled miraculously to eject the demon. The proprietors of the girl, who had made a traffic of her oracular powers, finding that she was dispossessed of the demon, wreaked their vengeance on Paul and Silas, and by slanderous accusations induced the magistrates to scourge them severely, and to commit them to prison. The jailer thrust them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. But the enemies of the truth cannot prevent the consolations of the Holy Ghost, from being communicated to the people of God united in affliction. "At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God;" and the Lord caused a great earthquake, which opened all the doors of the prison, and loosed every one's bonds. The jailer "awaking out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here." Struck with horror at the thought of the world to come, to which he had been hastening in all his guilt, he came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, "brought them out, and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved." The answer was plain and direct, such, as in every like case of enquiry, ought to be given: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." They then instructed him and his household in the nature of the gospel, and opened to him the doctrine of forgiveness by the blood of Christ. His conversion appears to have been sound. His ready submission to baptism, his affectionate treatment of those who had just before been the objects of his severity, and his joy in the Lord, evinced that he was turned from Satan to God. His whole family shared with him in the same blessings.

In the morning, the magistrates sent an order for the dismission of the prisoners. But Paul thought it not inconsistent with Christian meekness, to demand from them an apology for their illegal behavior to

Roman citizens; for such it seems Silas was, as well as Paul. The magistrates, alarmed, came personally to make concessions, which were easily accepted. Being dismissed from prison, they entered into Lydia's house, comforted the brethren, and left Philippi for a season.

Some years after, the apostle again visited this people, and found them still in a flourishing state.

Such was the work of God at Philippi. A considerable number of persons, once worshippers of idols, devoted to the basest lusts, and sunk in the grossest ignorance, were brought to the knowledge and love of the true God, and to the hope of salvation by his Son Jesus. In this faith and hope, they persevered amidst a severe persecution, steadily brought forth the fruits of charity, and lived in the joyful expectation of a blessed resurrection.

SECTION VIII.

Thessalonica.

OF Amphipolis and Apollonia, the next cities of Macedonia through which St. Paul passed, nothing particulars recorded. But at Thessalonica, a city re-built by Philip of Macedon, and deriving its name from his conquest of Thessaly, a church was formed inferior, in solid piety, to none in the primitive times. Here Paul followed his usual custom of preaching first to the Jews in their synagogue, and spent the first three Sabbaths in pointing out the evidences of christianity. The custom of the Jews, in allowing any of their countrymen to exhort in their synagogues, gave the apostle an easy opportunity of preaching to this people, till their usual enmity began to exert itself.—Some of the Jews were, however, converted; and a great multitude of devout Gentiles, who used to attend the synagogue, "and of the chief women not a few."

The restless, unconverted Jews were not ashamed to join with the most profligate Pagans in persecuting the new converts to christianity, and decent hypocrites and open sinners were now seen united in opposing the church of God. They assaulted the house of Jason, by whom, Paul and his companions were entertained. Precautions having been used to secrete them, Jason and some other christians were brought before the magistrates, and calumniated with the usual charge of sedition. The Roman governors were, however, content with exacting a security from Jason and his friends, for the peace of the state.—But the apostle knew too well the malice of the Jews to trust to their moderation, and therefore was obliged abruptly to leave the infant church, which appears, however, not to have been without pastors, whom, he charges the brethren, in an epistle soon after addressed to them, to honor and obey.

The growth of this church in godliness was soon renowned through the christian world. Their persecution appears to have been grievious, and hence the comfort of God their Savior, and the prospect of the invisible world, became more and more precious to them. The apostle made two attempts to return to them, but was as often disappointed by the malice of Satan. To strengthen and comfort them, he sent Timothy to them. From him, on his return, he learnt the strength and constancy of their faith and love, and their unshaken attachment to him, and affectionate remembrance of him. They appear to have felt the love of God in the strongest manner, and to have exercised it towards all around them.

To them the apostle wrote two affectionate epistles, in which he gave them much important instruction. Afterward he visited them and gave them much exhortation.

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SECTION IX.

Berea and Athens.

FROM Thessalonica, Paul was conducted to Berea a city of Macedonia. Here also was a Jewish synagogue, and here the preaching of the cross was, for the first time candidly received by the Jews. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed: also honorable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few." The rage of the Thessalonian Jews soon, however, disturbed this pleasing scene and stirred up a persecution, which obliged the christians to use some art to secure the apostle's life. His conductors, at first, took the road toward the sea, which might lead the persecutors to suppose he had quitted the continent. They then brought him safe to Athens, a city of Greece, renowned for taste and science, the school in which the greatest Romans studied philosophy. Here, while waiting for the arrival of Silas and Timothy, he beheld the monuments of the city with other eyes than those of a scholar and a gentleman. He saw, that even the excess of learning brought men no nearer to God: that no place was more given to idolatry. In the midst of classical luxury, he saw his Maker disgraced, and souls perishing in sin. Compassion for them, and indignation at their idolatry and refinement in sin, swallowed up all other emotions. He felt the worth of souls, and laid open the reasons of christianity to Jews in their synagogue, and to Gentile worshippers who attended the synagogue, and daily to all persons whom he met in the forum.—Among the Pagan philosophers, the Epicureans and the Stoics, were two opposite sects. The former placed the chief good in pleasure, the latter in virtue. These were correspondent to the two chief sects among the Jews, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and indeed to the dissipated and the self-righteous, who substitute their own reason and virtue in the room of Divine grace and influence. As these will in any age unite against the real friends of Jesus Christ, so it was here. To them the apostle appeared a mere babbler; "a setter forth of strange Gods." Jesus and the resurrection, which he preached, were ideas from which their minds were so abhorrent, that they took them for new gods.

It belonged to the court of Areopagus to take cognizance of things of this nature. This court had unjustly condemned to death the famous Socrates for his having honestly rebuked vice and improbity. St. Paul's escape from condemnation here, was owing to circumstances. This court, under the tolerating maxims of its Roman superiors, seems now to have had only the privilege of examining tenets as a synod, without the penal power of magistracy.

Paul, in his defence before this court, diplayed the native greatness of his mind, and the sanctified goodness of his heart. In language and by arguments strictly classical, he reproved their idolatry and announced to them so much of the gospel as was adapted to their very ignorant state. In this, though himself a prisoner at the bar, he labors to beget in the minds of the court a conviction of sin, and to prepare them to receive gospel mercy. A few believed in reality and with steadfastness, among whom was Dionysius, a member of the court, and a woman named Damaris. These, Paul having left to the care of that gracious God, who had opened their eyes, departed from a city as yet too haughty, too scornful, and too indifferent, concerning things of infinite moment, to receive the gospel. The little success at Athens evinces, that a spirit of literary trifling in religion, where all is mere theory, and the conscience is unconcerned, does effectually harden the heart.

SECTION X.

Corinth.

THIS was at that time the metropolis of Greece. Its situation on an isthmus rendered it remarkably convenient for trade. It was the residence of the Roman governor of Achaia, the name then given to all Greece, and it was full of opulence, learning, luxury, and sensuality. Hither the apostle came from Athens, and labored both among the Jews and the Gentiles. Here Providence gave him the acquaintance of Aquila and his wife Priscilla, two Jewish christians, lately expelled from Italy, with other Jews, by an edict of the emperor Claudius. With them he wrought as a tent maker, being of the same occupation: for every Jew, whether rich or poor, was obliged to follow some trade. After the arrival of Silas and Timothy, the apostle, with much vehemence, preached to his countrymen; but the only returns he met with, were opposition and abuse. The apostle was undaunted. He shook his raiment, told them he was clear of their destruction, would leave them, and apply himself to the Gentiles in the city. With this denunciation, he left the synagogue, and entered into the house of one Justus, a devout person, well affected to the gospel. Crispus also, the ruler of the synagogue, with his whole family, received the truth. Though we hear of no more Jewish converts made here, yet many Corinthians were converted. And a gracious vision from the Lord, informing that he had much people in this city, encouraged the apostle to stay here a year and a half. After his departure, Appollos, a zealous and eloquent Alexandrian Jew, came to Corinth, and was made a powerful instrument of building up this church, and of silencing the opposition of the Jews. We first hear of this man at Ephesus, speaking and teaching diligently the things of the Lord, knowing no more of christianity than what was contained in the system of John the Baptist, till instructed more perfectly in the way of life through Jesus Christ, by Aquila and Priscilla. From Ephesus he passed on to labor at Corinth; where "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ."

St. Paul appears, so far as circumstances admitted, to have kept up a constant correspondence with the churches. The care of them, as he says, came daily upon him. The Corinthians wrote to him to ask his advice on some cases of conscience, by which he learnt that a variety of evils and abuses had crept in among them. Perhaps no church was more numerous, and none less holy in the apostolic age. They were proud of gifts, contentious, self-conceited, and warm partizans for Paul, Apollos and other teachers, and by the indulgence of this spirit, shewed how little they had learnt of true wisdom. The apostle wrote them two faithful and pungent epistles, in which he endeavors by many weighty considerations to bring them to live and act in character as the affectionate friends and humble followers of Christ.

Among the Corinthians, there was so much conformity to the world, that they were very little exposed to persecution; they were even invited by their idolatrous neighbors, to partake of their idol-feasts, and there were some who complied. This wordly conformity the apostle sharply rebukes. Among them were false apostles, who, by pretending to instruct gratis, sought to depreciate Paul as a mercenary person. Hence, while he rebukes the evils of this people, he observes, that he labored among them freely, which the false apostles pretended to do. He proceeds to correct an abuse which obtained in their assemblies, in the article of decency of dress, and another much worse, the profanation of the Lord's supper. He insists also, on the correction of their abuse of spiritual gifts, particularly those of languages. It appears that love among the Corinthians was low, and that they, in some respects, prized gifts more highly than grace itself. There were some in this outwardly flourishing, but inwardly distempered, church, who even denied the resurrection of the body, which gave occasion to the apostle to illustrate that important article of our holy religion.

But notwithstanding all the corruptions which so much abounded in this church, the apostle mentions a very common effect which attended the faithful preaching of the gospel even at Corinth. If an ignorant idolater came into their assemblies, he was so penetrated with the display of the truth as it is in Jesus, that he could not but discover the very secrets of his soul, would prostrate himself in the worship of God, and report that God was in them of a truth.

It appears that the two epistles which the apostle wrote them, had a happy effect; that many of this church were truly recovered to a state of affection and practice worthy of christianity.

SECTION XI.

Rome.

OUR first accounts of the Roman church are very imperfect. This church, however, at an early period, appears by no means insignificant, either for the number, or the piety, of its converts. Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. The epistle, which St. Paul addressed to them, will, while the world endures, be the food of christian minds, and the richest system of doctrine to scriptural theologians. By the distinct directions which he gives for the maintenance of charity between Jews and Gentiles, it appears there must have been a considerable number of the former among them. Many of these, as persons of note, and eminent for real piety, in this epistle, he salutes by name, in the most kind and affectionate manner.

Paul had long wished, and even projected a visit to this church. He did not, however, expect that his journey thither should at last be at Cæsar's expense. He was confident it should be "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." And he entreats the prayers of the Romans, that he may be delivered from the infidel Jews, and be acceptable in his ministry to his believing countrymen at Jerusalem, whither he was then hastening; that "he might come to them with joy by the will of God," and be with them refreshed. Thus did christians in those days entreat the prayers of their brethren throughout the world, and sympathize with one another. Their prayers were answered. Paul was saved from Jewish malice, was acceptable to Jewish converts, "who had compassion on him in his bonds," and was conducted safe to Rome. His two years imprisonment at Rome, the apostle employed in receiving and faithfully instructing, without molestation, all who came to him. On account of his imprisonment and examination, the nature of the gospel became a subject of enquiry in Nero's court, and some of the tyrant's family hopefully became christians indeed. The indulgences granted to Paul as a Roman citizen, encouraged many preachers at Rome and its vicinity, to make greater exertions than before they had dared to do, for the good of souls.

SECTION XII.

Colosse.

THIS city of Phrygia was in the neighborhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis, and all three seem to have been converted by the ministry of Epaphras the Colossian, a companion and fellow-laborer of Paul, who attended him at Rome during his imprisonment there, and informed him of the sincerity and fruitfulness of their christian profession. But the apostle, in his epistle to his brethren of Colosse, knowing some of the dangers of their station to which they were exposed, cautions them against philosophy and vain deceit, against Judaical dependancies and rites, and against illegitimate humility and self-righteous austerities, as carrying the appearance of wisdom and goodness, but really leading only to extravagant self-estimation; calculated to draw the mind from that simplicity of dependence on Christ, which is the true rest of the soul, and the right frame of a christian. For the entire beauty of this epistle the reader is referred to the epistle itself.

SECTION XIII.

The seven Churches of Asia.

ON his departure from Corinth, Paul visited Ephesus, one of the seven churches of Asia, and first addressed by St. John in the book of Revelation. His stay was short, but the impression made on his hearers must have been remarkably great, as they pressed his longer continuance among them. He left, however, Aquila and Priscilla with them, whose labors were afterwards assisted by Apollos.

Paul himself, returning to Ephesus, baptized in the name of Jesus about twelve disciples, who had hitherto received only John's baptism. From this circumstance we learn, that from the first preaching of the Baptist nothing had been done in vain. The imperfect elements of that harbinger of Christ had paved the way for clearer discoveries, and a variety of preparatory works had tended to ripen the Church of God into the fulness of light and holiness.

Paul preached three months in the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus, till the usual perverseness of the Jews induced him to desist, and to form the new converts into a distinct church. One Tyrannus lent the apostle his school for two years, in which he daily ministered. And the whole region of Asia Proper had at different times an opportunity of hearing the gospel.

The word of God wonderfully triumphed at Ephesus. The work of conversion there was deep, vigorous, and soul-transforming to a great degree. Many, struck with horror at the recollection of former crimes, made an open confession; and many, who had dealt in the abominations of sorcery, now manifested their sincere detestation of them, by burning their books before all men, the price of which amounted to a large sum. "So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed."

The spiritual power of Jesus was never seen in a stronger light since the day of Pentecost; and the venal priesthood of Diana, the celebrated goddess of Ephesus, apprehending the total ruin of their hierarchy, with their devotees, made a violent effort to support their sinking superstition, and set the whole city into an uproar. But the prudent and eloquent harangue of a magistrate, called the town-clerk, was the providential instrument of Paul's preservation and deliverance. He calmed the spirit of the Ephesians, and silenced the uproar; after which Paul affectionately embraced the disciples, and left Ephesus. He left pastors to superintend that and the neighboring churches. But he foresaw with grief, as he afterward told these pastors in a very pathetic address, when he had sent for them to Miletus, that their present purity would not continue unstained. Wolves would enter among them, to devour the flock, and among themselves heretical perverseness would find countenance, and produce a pernicious separation. To prevent these evils the apostle exhorted them to the persevering discharge of all the duties of a holy life and conversation.

What the gospel really is, both as to doctrine, and duty, may be collected with the greatest certainty, in the excellent Epistle which Paul wrote to this church, containing a most admirable system of divinity, suited to the instruction of every church in every age.

In Paul's absence from this church, Timothy appears to have been the chief pastor. From the directions which he gave Timothy concerning the regulation of public worship, and the character and conduct of church officers, it appears that ecclesiastical polity had taken a firm root in this church. From the vision which St. John received in the isle of Patmos from the Lord Jesus Christ, and the several charges there given him to be addressed to the seven churches of Asia, descriptive of their spiritual state at that time, and giving suitable directions to each of them, it appears, that the Ephesians were then still alive in the faith. This was near the close of the first century. They patiently bore the cross, ever attendant on the real faith of Jesus, and labored in good works without fainting. They had, however, declined from the intenseness of that love, which they had at first exhibited. Their hearts panted not after Christ with that steady ardour with which they had formerly been animated. Though they had still the marks of health remaining, their vigor had much abated. In this they justly deserved blame. True zeal and true charity should ever grow, as the understanding has opportunity to improve. The ill effects of this decline, gradually paved the way, by the influence of their example on the rising generation, to unchurch this people, and for the desolation in which this very region now remains under Mahometan wickedness and ignorance.

The church of Smyrna was next addressed. It was once in a state of great purity of doctrine, and holiness of heart and life. Though poor in wordly circumstances, its members were rich in grace. Attempts were, however, now making to introduce Judaical corruptions among them, by those who were of the synagogue of Satan. They were reminded that a severe persecution was soon coming upon them, which should last some time, and they were exhorted to continue faithful unto death, with the assurance that the crown of life should be the reward of their fidelity

The church of Pergamus was approved of in general. They lived in the midst of a very impious people, who in effect worshipped Satan himself, and did all in their power to support his kingdom. Yet was the zeal of this church firm and steady. They did not, however, pass without some blame. There were some among them, who acting like Balaam of old, were employed, by Satan, to entice some of this church to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication; two evils often closely connected.—Some went even into the abomination of the Nicolaitans. These are exhorted to repent, from the fear of divine vengeance. On the whole, with a few exceptions, the church of Pergamus was pure and lively, and upheld the standard of truth, though encircled with the flames of martyrdom. One from their number received the crown of martyrdom while adhering to the truth as it is in Jesus. Concerning this church Christ testifies; "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

The church in Thyatira was also addressed, and represented in a thriving state. Charity, active services, patient dependance on God, and a steady reliance on the divine promises marked their works. Their last works are represented to be more than their first. But a few things are alleged against this church. They suffered an artful woman to seduce some into wicked practices. Her allegorical name was Jezebel, doubtless from her near resemblance in practice to the wife of Ahab, who exerted all her influence to promote idolatry in Israel. Our Lord informs them, that he gave her space to repent, but to no purpose, and therefore now denounces severe threatenings against her and her associates, at the same time vindicating his claim to divine worship by the incommunicable title of Him who searches the hearts, and declaring that he would make himself known to be such in all the churches. On those, who had kept themselves unspotted from these evils, he declares he would put no other burden; only he exhorts them to hold fast what they already had to the day of judgment.

The church of Sardis presents us with an unpleasant spectacle. They are spoken of as in a very drooping condition. They had neglected that course of prayer and watchfulness, which is necessary to preserve the divine life in vigor; and their works were now only faintly distinguishable from those of persons altogether dead in sin. Some good things however remained in them, which yet were ready to die; but their lives brought no glory to God, nor benefit to the cause of Christ, and could scarce prevent its being scandalized in the world. A few names, indeed, there were in Sardis on whom Jesus looked with complacency; they had not defiled their garments; but most of the christians there were deeply stained by corruption, probably by uniting with the world in their wicked practices. All here are called upon to live near to God, with the assurance that if they thus do they shall be crowned at last as the real friends of Christ.

Philadelphia is highly extolled. They were a humble, charitable, fervent people, deeply sensible of their weakness, and fearful of being seduced by Satan and their own hearts. To them, having a little strength, a promise of strong support is given, because they had maintained true patience in suffering.

The religion of Christ bids us to be cool in our affections but only to worldly things; the lukewarm state, therefore, of Laodicea is highly blamed. The Laodiceans were satisfied with themselves and desired no higher attainments. They had learnt to maintain, in easy indolence an orthodoxy of sentiment without any awakened and affectionate attention to the real activity of vital piety.

Such was the situation of the seven churches of Asia. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

CHAPTER II.

The remainder of the first Century.

THE apostles in general appear not to have left Judea, till after the first council held at Jerusalem.—Probably the threatening appearances of its desolation by the Romans, hastened their departure into distant regions. Before the close of this century the power of the gospel appears to have been felt throughout the Roman empire. I shall divide this chapter into four parts, and review, first, the progress and persecution of the church. Secondly, the lives, characters, and deaths of the apostles. Thirdly, the heresies of this period. And, lastly, the general character of christianity in this first age.

It was about the year of our Lord 64, that the city of Rome suffered a general conflagration. The author of this appears to have been Nero. He, however, endeavored, by every measure, to fix the odium of this horrid deed upon the christians at Rome, and thereby to excite against them a spirit of persecution. They, though actuated by the purest benevolence, by calling upon their neighbors to repent and believe the gospel, and thus to flee from the wrath to come, had excited the bitter resentment of the opposers of the gospel. Thus the christians at Rome, by their exertions for the spiritual and eternal good of their heathen neighbors, had incurred the hatred of Nero and others inimical to a life of holiness. When the city was burnt, the christians were charged by Nero with having been the incendiaries. The minds of the opposers of christianity were hereby greatly exasperated against them, and a bitter persecution immediately ensued. The christians were seized, were covered with skins of wild beasts and torn by dogs, were crucified, and set on fire, that they might serve for lights in the night time. Nero offered his garden for this spectacle, and exhibited the games of the circus. It appears from well authenticated history, that Nero ordered some of the christians to be covered with wax and other combustible materials; and that, after a sharp stake was put under their chin, to make them continue upright, they were burnt alive to give light to the spectators. It is probable that this persecution was not confined to Rome, but that it extended to other parts of the Roman empire. The church in Spain appears at this time to have had her martyrs.

Three or four years were probably the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution, as in the year 68 the cruel tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit, summoned before the Divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in an eminent degree. About forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came on the body of the Jewish nation to the uttermost. But before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, the christian Jews, warned by a divine command, fled from that devoted city, to Pella, a village beyond Jordan; where they were saved from the destruction which soon after overwhelmed their countrymen.

The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem would naturally occasion some respite to the christians from their sufferings; and we hear no more of their persecuted state, till the reign of Domitian, the last of the Flavian family, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81. He does not appear to have raged against the christians, till the latter end of his reign. Indeed, in imitation of his father Vespasian, he made enquiry for such of the Jews as were descended from the royal line of David. His motives were evidently political. But there wanted not those who were glad of an opportunity of wreaking their malice on christians. Some persons were charged with being related to the royal family, who were brought before the emperor. They appear to have been related to our Lord, grandsons of Jude the apostle, his cousin. Domitian asked them, if they were of the family of David, which they acknowledged. He then enquired what possessions they had. They laid open their poverty, and owned that they maintained themselves by their labor. The truth of their confession was evidenced by their hands, and their appearance in general. Domitian then interrogated them concerning Christ and his kingdom, when and where it should appear.—They answered, like their Master, when questioned by Pilate, that his kingdom was not of this world, but heavenly; that its glory should be at the consummation of the world, when he should judge the quick and the dead, and reward every man according to his works. Poverty is sometimes a defence against oppression, though it never shields from contempt. Domitian was satisfied, that his throne was in no danger from christian ambition, and the grandsons of Jude had the honor of being dismissed with the same sort of derision, with which their Savior had been by Herod. Thus had the son of God provided for his relations; they were poor in worldly circumstances, but rich in faith, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom.

As Domitian improved in cruelty, toward the end of his reign, he renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution. He put to death many persons accused of atheism, the common charge against christians, on account of their refusing to worship the Pagan gods. Among these was the consul Flavius Clemens, his cousin, who had espoused Flavia his relation. Some were spoiled of their goods, and Domitilla herself was banished into the island of Pandataria. These two noble persons, appear to have been genuine christians, distinguished for eminent piety, and for their contempt of secular ambition, and the vices of the imperial court.

In the year 96, Domitian was slain, and Nerva, the succeeding emperor, published a pardon, for those who were condemned for impiety, recalled those who were banished, and forbad the accusing of any person on account of impiety or Judaism. Others, who were under accusation, or under sentence of condemnation, now escaped by the lenity of Nerva. Domitilla, however, still continued in exile, probably because she was a relation of the late tyrant. Doubtless she was not forsaken of her God and Savior.

II. I am now to review the lives, characters and deaths of the apostles.

The first of the twelve apostles, who suffered martyrdom, we have seen, was James the son of Zebedee, who fell a sacrifice to Herod Agrippa's ambitious desire of popularity. I recall him to the reader's memory on account of a remarkable circumstance attending his death. The man, who had drawn him before the tribunal, when he saw the readiness with which he submitted to martrydom, was struck with remorse, and, by one of those sudden conversions, not infrequent amidst the remarkable out-pourings of the Spirit, was himself turned from the power of Satan to God, and confessed Christ with great cheerfulness.— They were both led to execution, and in the way the accuser requested the apostle's forgiveness, which he soon obtained. James turning to him answered, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him, and they were beheaded together. The efficacy of divine grace, and the blessed fruit of holy example, are both illustrated in this story, of which it were to be wished we knew more than the very scanty account which has been preserved.

The other James was preserved in Judea to a much later period. His martyrdom took place about the year 62, and his Epistle was published a little before his death. He always resided at Jerusalem. On account of his singular innocence and integrity, the name of Just was generally given him. Many Jews respected the man, and admired the fruits of the gospel in him. It appears from well authenticated history, that the Jews thought it a pitiable thing that so good a man should be a christian. His firm adherence to Jesus Christ and to the doctrines of the cross, was, however, their abhorrence. Paul's escape from their malice by appealing to Cæsar had sharpened their spirits, and on James, who was merely a Jew, and could plead no Roman exemptions, they were determined to wreak their vengeance. Festus dying president of Judea, before his successor, Albinus, arrived, Ananias, the high-priest, a Saducee, and a mercilless persecutor, holding, in the interior, the supreme power, called a council, before which he brought James, with some others, accusing him of breaking the law of Moses. But it was not easy to procure his condemnation.

The great were uneasy on account of the vast increase of christian converts by his means, and endeavored to entangle him by persuading him to mount a pinnacle of the temple, and to speak to the people assembled at the time of the passover, against christianity. James, being placed aloft, delivered a frank confession of Jesus, as then sitting at the right hand of power, and who should come in the clouds of heaven. Upon this Ananias and the rulers were highly incensed. To disgrace his character was their first intention.—This had failed. To murder him was their next, and this attempt was of much more easy execution. Crying out, that Justus himself was seduced, they threw him down and stoned him. The apostle had strength to fall on his knees, and to pray, "I beseech thee, Lord God and Father, for them; for they know not what they do." One of the priests, moved with the scene, cried out, "Cease, what do you mean? This just man is praying for you." A person present with a fuller's club beat out his brains, and completed his martyrdom.

Simeon, the son of that Cleopas mentioned by St. Luke, as one of the two who went to Emmaus, and who was the brother of Joseph, our Lord's reputed father, was appointed, in the room of James, a pastor of the church of Jerusalem, where he continued at the end of this century.

Paul the apostle seems to have labored with unwearied activity from about the year 36 to the year 68, that is, from his conversion to the period in which St. Luke finishes his history. Within this period, he wrote fourteen Epistles, which will be the blessed means of feeding the souls of the faithful to the end of time. His pungent preaching at Rome, and his defence of the gospel before the Roman court, were attended with some fruits of saving conversion. A cup-bearer and a concubine of Nero, Chrysostom informs us, were, by means of Paul's preaching, and his defence before the Roman court, converted to the christian faith. This, it appears, excited Nero's resentment and rage; and we are assured that Paul was eventually slain with the sword by Nero's order. Before the conversion of Paul, we find him hurried, by his Pharisaic haughtiness and fiery temper, into a very sanguinary course of bitter persecution against the church of Christ; after his conversion we see the work of divine grace wonderfully exemplified in him, for about 30 years; we see him living the friend of mankind, continually returning good for evil, an example of patience and benevolence, though possessing a taste, a spirit and genius which might have shone among the greatest statesmen and men of letters that ever lived, yet steadily attentive to heavenly things, devotedly engaged to build up the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, and to bring souls to glory.

Amidst the constant display of every godly and social virtue, we learn from his own account that he ever felt himself, "carnal, sold under sin," and that sin dwelt in him continually. From his writings we learn what is the depth of human wickedness; and not one of the apostles seems to have understood so much as he did, the riches of divine grace, and the peculiar glory of the christian religion. The doctrines of election, justification, adoption, of the priesthood and offices of Christ, and of the internal work of the Holy Ghost, as well as the most perfect morality, founded on christian principles, are most beautifully brought into view in his writings.

It appears from well authenticated history, that, when Paul was put to death, under Nero, Peter suffered with him by crucifixion with his head downward, a kind of death which he himself desired, most probably, from an unfeigned humility, that he might not die in the same manner as his Lord had done.

Peter's wife had been called to martyrdom a little before himself. He saw her led to death, and rejoiced at the grace of God vouchsafed to her, and addressing her by name, exhorted and comforted her with, "Remember the Lord." Peter seems to have lived long in a state of matrimony, and by Clement's account, was industrious in the education of his children. Sanguine in his attachments, he appears to have been a plain, honest, open hearted, active follower of Jesus Christ; in grace and supernatural wisdom, made only inferior to Paul, and an instrument of the greatest good in the conversion of many precious souls. In early life he was remarkable for the forwardness of his temper, but afterward, by grace was made eminent for his unfeigned humility. He, who wrought effectually in Paul, for the conversion of the Gentiles, was mighty in Peter, for the conversion of very many among the Jews.

Mark was sister's son to Barnabas, the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem. He appears to have been instructed in christian principles from early life. His views of religion seem to have been at first, faint, and his disposition naturally languid and indolent.—We are told by Epiphanius, that Mark was one of those who was offended at the words of Christ recorded in the 6th chapter of John, and that he then forsook him, but was afterward recovered by means of Peter.

After our Lord's ascension, he attended his uncle Barnabas with Paul; but soon left them and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas afterward took him to Cyprus. Though languid at first, he at length became more vigorous. Even Paul himself, who had been so much offended with him, declares, "He is profitable to me for the ministry." From the epistle to the Colossians it is evident that he was with the apostle Paul in his imprisonment at Rome. This was in the year 62. His gospel was written by the desire of the believers at Rome, about two years after. I know not when to fix the time of his coming to Egypt. But he is allowed to have founded the church of Alexandria, and to have been buried there. The society of Barnabas, Paul and Peter, at different times, was evidently very useful to him. His natural indolence needed such incentives. It was the grace of God which roused him to activity.

Of the labors of eight apostles, nothing, important is recorded. Of John, a few valuable fragments may be collected.

About the year 50, he attended the council at Jerusalem. Asia Minor was the great theatre of his ministry, particularly Ephesus, the care of which church remained with him after the decease of the rest of the apostles. While resident at Ephesus, once going to bathe, and perceiving Cerinthus in the bath, he came out hastily. "Let us flee," says he, "lest the bath should fall ,while Cerinthus, an enemy of truth, is within." Thus he showed his abhorrence of his corrupt and heritical sentiments, by shunning his society in such a manner as to manifest his pointed disapprobation of error.

The primitive christians were indeed more careful to avoid the society of false professors than of open unbelievers. With the latter, they had at times some free intercourse; with the former they refused even to eat. If we believe, those who labor to ruin souls by propagating antichristian views, to be exceedingly dangerous members of society, and not in the smallest degree to be countenanced, by any acts of familiarity, we can easily perceive why St. John took the method which he did, to manifest his abhorrence of the corrupt and detestable errors of Cerinthus.

Tertullian tells us, that by order of Domitian, John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, and came out without being hurt. This must have happened, most probably, during the latter part of his reign. This miracle, however, softened not the heart of Domitian, who probably supposed the apostle fortified himself by some magical incantations. The cruel persecutor banished him into the solitary isle of Patmos, where he was favored with the visions of the Apocalypse.—After Domitian's death John returned from Patmos and governed the Asiatic churches. There he remained till the time of Trajan. While on a tour of visiting the churches, John, observing a remarkably handsome young man, warmly recommended him to the care of a particular pastor. The young man was baptized, and for a time lived as a christian. But being gradually corrupted by bad company, he grew idle, intemperate, and at length so dishonest, as to become a captain of a band of robbers. Some time after, John had an occcasion to enquire of the pastor concerning the young man, who told him, that he was now dead to God, and inhabited a mountain over against his church. John, in the vehemence of his charity, went to the place, and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers. "Bring me," says he "to your captain," who beheld him coming. As soon as the young man knew the apostle, he was struck with shame and fled. The aged apostle following cried, "My son, why flyest thou from thy father unarmed and old? Fear not, as yet there remaineth hope of salvation." Hearing this the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of christians, nor did he leave him, till he found him fully restored by divine grace.

Another story of St. John, short, but pleasing, is, that being now very old, and unable to say much in christian assemblies, "Children, love one another," was his constantly repeated sermon. Being asked why he told them only one thing, he answered that nothing else was needed. This story rests on the testimony of Jerom; it shows the spirit of the age, and its truth is allowed.

John lived three or four years after his return to Asia, having been preserved to the age of an hundred years for the benefit of the church, a pattern of preeminent charity and goodness.

Of the apostle Barnabas, nothing is known, except what is recorded in the Acts. Honorable mention is there made of his character, and a particular description of his labors with St. Paul. It is a great injury to him, to suppose the Epistle, which goes by his name, to have been his.

We have no ecclesiastical work, exclusive of the scriptures, except Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians which does any peculiar honor to the first century. Clement is he whom Paul calls his fellow-laborer, and whose name he declares to be in the book of life. He long survived Paul and Peter, and was, no doubt, a blessing to the Roman church, over which he presided nine years. His Epistle was read in many of the primitive churches, and was admired exceedingly by the ancients. From this Epistle it appears that St. Paul's two Epistles to the church of Corinth had been abundantly useful, and that the apostle had reason to rejoice in the confidence which he reposed in the sincerity that prevailed in many of them, notwithstanding the evils which he censured, as existing in that church. From the Epistle of Clement, it, however, appears, that the Church of Corinth had, during this century, much trouble from restless and ambitious persons who endeavored to depreciate the real worth of their godly pastors, and to raise their own characters upon the ruin of the reputation of those who justly merited the highest estimation and confidence. These Clement faithfully reproves. He exhorts Christ's flock to live in peace with all their pastors.

III. The heresies of this century are now to be noticed. The reader will not expect that I should solicitously register the names, and record the opinions and acts of those, who are commonly called heretics. I have only to view them in one single light, as they deviated from the spirit of the gospel. In this let us keep steadily in view what the gospel really is: that unfeigned faith in Christ, as the only Savior of sinners, and the effectual influence of the Holy Ghost, in recovering souls altogether depraved, are its leading principles.

When the out-pouring of the Spirit began, these things were taught with power, and no sentiments which militated against them, could be supported for a moment. As, through the prevalence of human corruptions and the craft of Satan, the love of the truth was lessened, heresies and various abuses of the gospel appeared; and in estimating them, we may form some idea of the declension, which, towards the end of this century appeared in the church made up of Jews and Gentiles.

The epistolary part of the New Testament affords but too ample proof of corruption. From these we learn how prone the human heart is to undervalue the mediation of Jesus, and the glory of divine grace, in the gospel plan of salvation, and to lean to the self-flattering schemes of a self-righteous spirit.

The heresies which appeared in the apostolic times were two, the Docetæ and the Ebionites.

The Docetæ, or Gnostics, as they are sometimes called, held that the Son of God had no proper humanity, and that he died only in appearance on the cross.

The Ebionites, for the most part, while they acknowledged the excellence of the character of Jesus Christ, considered him a mere man, descended from Mary and her husband Joseph. With such low ideas of the Redeemer's person, they denied the virtue of his atoning blood, and labored to establish justification by the works of the law. To be consistent with themselves, they rejected the divine authority of St. Paul's Epistles and accused the apostle of being an Antinomian.

These two heritical schemes, the one opposing the humanity of Christ, and the other denying his Divinity, were the inventions of men leaning to their own understandings, and unwilling to admit the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.

The primitive christians held, that the Redeemer was both God and man, equally possessed of the real properties of both natures; and no man, willing to take his creed from the New Testament, ever thought otherwise; the proofs of both natures in one person, Christ Jesus, being, nearly, equally diffused through the sacred books. The fifth verse, in the ninth chapter to the Romans, expressing both, establishes this great fundamental doctrine of our most holy religion. The only difficulty in this subject is, for man to be brought to believe, on divine authority, that doctrine, the ground of which he cannot comprehend. Proud men, unacquianted with that internal misery and depravity of our nature, which renders a complete character, like that of Christ, so Divinely suitable to their wants, and so exactly proper to mediate between God and men, were soon willing to oppose the doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus Christ: as there were two ways of doing this, by taking away one or other of the two natures, we see at once the origin of the two sects before us. The doctrine of the atonement was opposed by the Docetæ, in their denial of the real Divinity of Jesus Christ, and by the Ebionites, in their denial of his Divine nature, which stamps an infinite value on his sufferings.

The memoirs of these heretics, inform us of some who professed an extraordinary degree of sanctity, to be abstracted altogether from the flesh, and to live in excessive abstemiousness. This shows that they denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and grounded their hopes of eternal life on their own self righteous doings. Others, again, as if to support their christian liberty, lived in sin with greediness, and indulged themselves in all the gratifications of sensuality. By these two heresies, toward the close of this century, the Jewish and the Gentile converts were considerably corrupted. Jerom informs us that John wrote his gospel by the desire of the pastors of the Asiatic churches with a particular design to counteract Cerinthus and Ebion, who were coadjutors in this heresy. The very beginning of his gospel is indeed expressive of the grand design of the whole. It is an authoritative declaration of the proper Deity of Jesus Christ. The particular assurance which John gives us of the real death of his Master, and of the issuing of real blood and water from his side, evidently implies that he was zealous to obviate the error of the Docetæ. We are not to understand his laying so great a stress on Jesus Christ's having come in the flesh in any other light.

While St. John lived, these heretics were much discountenanced; and those who embraced their sentiments, were always considered as perfectly distinct from the christian church. Doubtless they called themselves christians, and so do all heretics, for obvious reasons; and for reasons as obvious, all, who are tender of the fundamental principles of the gospel, should not own their right to the appellation.

It does not appear from any evidence, which I can find, that these men were ever persecuted for their religion. Their doctrines pleased the carnal mind too well to excite a spirit of persecution; from which we infer that they were not according to the word of God, and real godliness. "They spake of the world, and the world heard them."

IV. We are now to consider the general character of christianity in this first age.

The divinity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and election, were doctrines of the primitive church, in view and belief of which the grace of God was so richly and gloriously displayed in the saving conversion of many souls in the first century.

In this century, a revolution took place, in the human mind and in human manners, the most astonishing that was ever seen in any age, and was effected against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world; and this too, not in countries rude or uncivilized, but in the most humanized, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe, within the Roman empire; no part of which was exempted from its effects. This empire, within the first century, seems to have been the proper limit of christian conquests.

And what was the change? It was from bad to good. The religious and moral principles of both Jews and Gentiles, were, before their conversion, grossly bad. The idolatries, abominations and ferocity of the Gentile world, must be allowed not to have been less than they are described in the first chapter to the Romans. The writings of Horace and Juvenal prove, that the picture, painted by the apostle, is not overdrawn. The extreme wickedness of the Jews cannot be denied.

In this revolution, are thousands of men, turned from sin to holiness, many in a very short space of time, reformed in understanding, in inclination, in affection; knowing, loving, and confiding in God; from a state of mere selfishness, converted into the purest philanthropists; living only to please God, and to exercise kindness toward one another; recovering really, what philosophy only pretended to, the dominion of reason over passion, unfeignedly subject to their Maker, rejoicing in his favor amidst sufferings, and serenely waiting for their dismission, to a land of blissful immortality. Is not the hand of God visible in all this? Nothing, surely, but special and efficacious grace, in the effusion of the Holy Spirit, could have effected this glorious change and reformation.

But the christian church was not in possession of any external dignity or secular power. No one nation as yet was christian, though thousands of individuals were so, but those chiefly of the middling and lower ranks.

In doctrine, they all worshipped the one living and true God, who made himself known to them in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; each of these they were taught to worship by the very office of baptism performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And the whole economy of grace so constantly reminded them of their obligations to the Father who chose them to salvation; to the Saviour who died for them, and to the Comforter who supported and sanctified them, and was so closely connected with their experience and practice, that they were perpetually incited to worship the Divine Three in One. They all agreed in feeling conviction of sin, of helplessness, of a state of perdition; in relying on the atoning blood, perfect righteousness, and prevalent intercession of Jesus, as their only hope of heaven.—Regeneration by the Holy Ghost was their common privilege, and without his constant influence, they owned themselves wholly inclined to sin and vanity. Their community of goods, and their love-feasts, though discontinued at length, probably because found impracticable, demonstrated their superlative charity and heavenly-mindedness. Yet a gloomy cloud hung over the conclusion of this century.

The first impressions, made by the out-pouring of the Spirit, are generally the strongest and the most decisively distinct from the spirit of the world.—

Hence the disorders of schism and heresy, whose tendency is to counteract the pure work of God.

The first christians, with the purest benevolence toward the persons of heretics, gave their errors no quarter, and discountenanced them by every reasonable method. The heretics, on the contrary, endeavored to unite themselves with christians. This they did, with a view, no doubt, to obtain a more extensive circulation of their errors, under the cloke of their being still in fellowship with those, whose real piety and soundness in the faith, could not be doubted.

CENTURY II.

CHAPTER I.

The History of Christians during the Reign of Trajan.

THE master of the Roman world, in the beginning of this century, was the renowned Trajan. His predecessor Nerva had restored the christian exiles, and granted a full toleration to the church. Hence the last of the apostles had recovered his station at Ephesus, and slept in the Lord, before the short interval of tranquility was closed by the persecuting spirit of Trajan, who had a confirmed prejudice against christians, and meditated the extinction of the name.

During his reign, many christians, in Bithynia, suffered martyrdom, merely because they would not abjure Christ and join with the idolatrous heathen in their idol worship. It appears from the letter of Pliny, governor of Bithynia to Trajan his master, in which he desires to be informed what course to take with christians in that province, and from the answer to that letter, by Trajan, that, at that time, the christians in that province were very numerous, and that they were most exemplarily pious, and inoffensive in their lives and conversation: but that, notwithstanding all their peaceable demeanor, they were sorely persecuted, and many suffered death because they would not renounce Christ as their Savior, nor forsake the religion of the gospel. This was about the year 106.

In Asia, Arrius Antoninus persecuted with extreme fury. Concerning the peculiarly afflicted state of the Asiatic christians, it is related by Tertullian, that the whole body of the brethren, wearied with constant hardships, presented themselves before his tribunal.—He ordered a few of them to execution, and said to the rest, "Miserable people, if you choose death, you may find precipices and halters enough."

I am willing to believe, that the christians hoped to disarm the persecutor by the sight of their numbers.

One of the most venerable characters at this time was Simeon, who had, after the death of St. James, been invested with the pastoral office over the church at Jerusalem. Jerusalem indeed was no more, but the church still existed in some part of Judea.—Some heretics accused Simeon as a christian, before Atticus, the Roman governor. He was then 120 years old, and was scourged many days. The persecutor was astonished at his hardiness, not moved with pity for his sufferings; at last he ordered him to be crucified.

It was in the year 107, that Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, suffered death for the faith of Jesus. On the death of Euodius, about the year 70, he had been appointed in his room by the apostles, who were then alive. He governed the church during this long period. Nor was it a small indication, of the continued grace of God to that city, to have been blessed so long with such a luminary. Ignatius appears to have been of a spirit truly apostolic; much given to prayer and fasting; by the steadfastness of his doctrine and labours opposed to the floods of the adversary; faithful and clear in his exposition of the Holy Scriptures, not counting his life dear to him for the testimony of Jesus: he even desired martyrdom for the name of his Redeemer. And by Trajan, when visiting Antioch, on his way to the Parthian war, he was ordered to Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people, where he was speedily devoured. A few bones only were left, which were carefully preserved, and afterwards buried at Antioch.

CHAPTER II.

The History of Christians during the Reigns of Adrian and Antoninus Pius.

TRAJAN died in the year 117. He did not live to return from his military expedition into the East.—His successor Adrian, appears never to have issued any persecuting edicts. But the iniquity of his predescessor survived, and Adrian's silent acquiescence for a time, gave it sufficient scope to exert itself in acts of barbarity.

In the mean time, the gospel spread more and more. A number of apostolical persons demonstrated by their conduct, that the spirit, which had influenced the apostles, rested upon them. Filled with divine charity, they distributed their substance to the poor, and travelled into regions which as yet had not heard the sound of the gospel; and having planted the faith, they ordained other persons as pastors, committing to them the culture of the new ground, and passed on to other countries. Hence numbers, through grace, embraced the doctrine of salvation, at the first hearing, with much alacrity. It is natural to admire here the power of grace in the production of so pure and charitable a spirit, to contrast it with the illiberal selfishness too prevalent even among the best in our days, and to regret how little is done for the propagation of the gospel through the world, by nations whose aids of commerce and navigation are so much superior to those enjoyed by the ancients. One advantage indeed these christians possessed, which we do not. They were all one body, one church, of one name, and cordially loved one another as brethren. There were indeed many heretics; but real christians did not admit them into their communities. The line of distinction was drawn with sufficient precision, and a dislike of the person or offices of Christ, and of the real spirit of holiness, discriminated the heretics: and separation from them, while it was undoubtedly the best mark of benevolence to their souls, tended to preserve the faith and love of the true christians in genuine purity.

Among these holy men, Quadratus was much distinguished. In the pastoral charge of the church at Athens, he succeeded Publius, who had, in this, or the foregoing reign, suffered martyrdom. He found the flock in a dispersed and confused state, their public assemblies deserted, their zeal grown cold and languid, their lives and manners corrupted; and they seemed likely to apostatize from christianity. Quadratus labored to recover them with much zeal and with equal success. Order and discipline were restored, and with them the holy flame of godliness.

In the sixth year of his reign, Adrian came to Athens, and was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries. By this he manifested his fondness for Pagan institutions, and a spirit hostile to christianity. The persecutors proceeded with sanguinary vigor; when Quadratus presented to the emperor an apology for christianity, defending it from the calumnies of its enemies; in which he particularly took notice of our Savior's miracles, his curing diseases, and raising the dead; some instances of which, he says, were alive in his time.

Aristides, a christian writer, at that time, at Athens, apologized to the emperor on the same subject. The good sense of the emperor was at length roused to do justice to his innocent subjects. Also Serenius Granianus, pro-consul of Asia, wrote to the emperor, stating that, to him it seemed unreasonable, the christians should be put to death, merely to gratify the clamors of the people, without trial and without any crime proved against them. This appears to be the first instance that any Roman governor dared publicly to advance ideas contrary to Trajan's iniquitous maxims, which inflicted death on christians as such, abstracted from any guilt. This goes to prove, that the severe sufferings of christians in Asia, which were very remarkable, were owing more to the active and sanguinary spirit of persecution itself, which from Trajan's example, had become very fashionable, than to any explicit regard to his edicts. We have Adrian's rescript addressed to Minucius Fundanus, the successor of Granianus, whose government had nearly closed when he wrote to the emperor.

To Minucius Fundanus.

"I have received a letter written to me by the very "illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have suc-"ceeded. To me then the affair seems by no means "fit to be slightly passed over, that men may not be "disturbed without cause, and that sycophants may "not be encouraged in their odious practices. If the "people of the province will appear publicly, and "make open charges against the christians, so as to "give them an opportunity of answering for them-"selves, let them proceed in that manner only, and "not by rude demands and mere clamours. For it is "much more proper, if any will accuse them, that you "should take cognizance of these matters. If any then "accuse them, and shew that they commit any thing "against the laws, do you determine according to the "nature of the crime. But, by Hercules, if the charge "be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of "the offence, and punish it as it deserves."

This evidently shows, that it was the intention of the emperor to have prevented christians as such from being punished: if they demeaned themselves peaceably and were obedient to the laws of the empire, they should not be punished merely for being christians.—But, though no persons were more innocent, peaceable, and well disposed than they, yet the enmity of men's minds against real godliness, so natural in all ages, laid them under extreme disadvantages, unknown to others, in vindicating themselves from unjust aspersions; and this forms, indeed, one of the most painful crosses which good men endure in this life. One of these disadvantages was, the many heretics, who, wearing the name, did not live the lives of christians, but were guilty of the most detestable enormities. These enormities were indiscriminately charged by the Pagans on christians in general. This circumstance, in addition to other still more important reasons, rendered them careful in preserving the line of separation distinct; and by the purity of their lives, they were enabled gradually to overcome all uncandid insinuations.

There is extant also a letter of Adrian, in which he speaks of the christians as very numerous at Alexandria, and of christian bishops, in a manner, as considerable as the priests of Serapis. Since St. Mark's time, it is evident, though we have scarce any particular accounts, that the gospel must have flourished abundantly in Egypt.

But the same equitable rule of government, which forbade Adrian to punish the christians, led him to be very severe against the Jews; for now appeared Barchochebas, who pretended to be the star, prophesied of by Balaam. This miserable people, who had rejected the true Christ, received the imposter with open arms; who led them into horrid crimes, and among the rest, into a cruel treatment of the christians. The issue of the rebellion was the entire exclusion of the Jews from the city and territory of Jerusalem.

Adrian, after a reign of 21 years, was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who appears to have been, at least in his own personal character and intentions, always guiltless of christian blood. It was very difficult for the enemies of Christ to support their persecuting spirit, with any tolerably specious pretentions. The abominations of heretics, whom ignorance and malice will ever confound with real christians, furnished them with some. These were, probably, much exaggerated. Whatever they were, the whole christian church was accused of them. Incest and the devouring of infants were charged upon them, and thus a cloke was afforded for the barbarous treatment of the best of mankind, till time detected the slanders, and men became ashamed to believe what was in its own nature improbable and supported by no evidence. At this time it pleased God to endow some christians with the power of defending his truth by the manly arms of rational argumentation. Justin Martyr presented his first apology to the emperor Antoninus Pius, about the third year of his reign, A. D. 140. He was of that class of men who in those days were usually called philosophers. The information and arguments which this apology contained, were not in vain. Antoninus was a man of sense and humanity, open to conviction, and uncorrupted by the vain and chimerical philosophy of the times, and desirous of doing justice to all mankind.

Asia Propria was still the scene of vital christianity and of cruel persecution. The christians, of that country, charged by their Pagan neighbors, with being the procuring cause of some late tremendous earthquakes, applied to Antoninus complaining of the many injuries which they sustained from the people of the country. We have both in Eusebius, and at the end of Justin's first apology, the edict sent to the common council of Asia, every line of which well deserves our attention.

The Emperor to the Common Council of Asia.

"I am quite of opinion, that the gods will take care "to discover such persons. For it much more con- "cerns them to punish those who refuse to worship "them than you, if they be able. But you harass and "vex them, and accuse them of atheism and other "crimes, which you can by no means prove. To "them it appears an advantage to die for their religion, "and they gain their point, while they throw away "their lives, rather than comply with your injunctions. "As to the earthquakes, which have happened in past "times, or lately, is it not proper to remind you of "your own despondency when they happen, to desire "you to compare your spirit with theirs, and observe "how serenely they confide in God? In such seasons "you seem to be ignorant of the gods, and neglect their "worship, and you live in the practical ignorance of "the Supreme God himself, and you harass and persecute to death those who do worship him. Concerning "these men, some others of the provincial governors "wrote to our divine father (Adrian) to whom he returned answer, that they should not be molested, unless "they appeared to attempt something against the Roman government. Many also have signified to me "concerning these men, to whom I have returned an "answer, agreeably to the maxims of my father.— "But if any will still accuse any of them as such "(as christians) let the accused be acquitted, though "he appear to be a christian, and let the accuser be "punished."

This was set up at Ephesus in the common assembly of Asia.

Eusebius informs us, that this was no empty edict, but was really put in execution. Nor did this emperor content himself merely with one edict. He wrote to the same purport to the Larisseans, the Thessalonians, the Athenians, and all the Greeks.

As this prince reigned 23 years, such vigorous measures must have had their effect. And we may fairly conclude that during a great part of his reign the christians were permitted to worship God in peace.

CHAPTER III.

Justin Martyr.

THIS great man was born at Neapolis in Samaria, anciently called Sichem. His father was a Gentile, probably one of the Greeks, belonging to the colony transplanted thither, who gave his son a philosophical education. In his youth he travelled for the improvement of his understanding, and Alexandria afforded him all the entertainment which an inquisitive mind could derive from the fashionable studies. He sought happiness first in the manner prescribed by the stoics, but finding that he could learn nothing of God, nor obtain true happiness by those pursuits, he betook himself to a peripatetic, whose anxious desire of settling the price of his instructions, convinced Justin, that truth did not dwell with him. At length, having applied himself to a Platonic philosopher for instruction, with a plausible appearance of success, he gave himself up to retirement and meditation. Walking near the sea he was met by an aged person of a venerable appearance, whom he beheld with much attention. "Do you know me?" says he; when Justin answered in the negative, he asked him why he surveyed him with such attention? "I wondered," says he "to find any person here." The stranger observed that he was waiting for some domestics; "but what brought you here?" says he. Justin professed his love of private meditation. The other hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation, abstracted from practice, pointed him to the unsatisfying nature of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy, recommended to him the study of the writings of the Hebrew prophets; gave him some views of christianity, in its nature and evidences, and added, "Above all things, pray that the gates of light may be opened to thee; for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by all, except God and his Christ give to a man to understand." "The man having spoken these things and much more, left me," says Justin, "directed me to pursue these things, and I saw him no more. Immediately a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets, and those men who are the friends of Christ, and weighing within myself his words, I found this to be the only sure philosophy." We have no more particulars of the exercises of his soul in religion. His conversion took place some time in the reign of Adrian.

Coming to Rome in the time of Antoninus Pius he there wrote a confutation of the heretics. About the year 140, Justin published his excellent apology for the christians, addressed to Antoninus Pius, which appears to have had a considerable influence on the mind of that prudent emperor, with respect to the christians. In this, he shows that the faults of any who bore the christian name were not to be charged upon the whole body, and illustrates the real nature of christianity, by showing the happy effects which it then had on mankind. He shows, that, though heretics were fond of the christian name, they were not persecuted, and there was nothing in their spirit and conduct which provoked persecution. He shows that the small number of Jewish converts, compared with the whole body of the nation, was no objection to the genuineness of christianity, but strictly according to the prophecies of the Old Testament.—He likewise describes the holy customs of the primitive christians in public worship, and in the administration of the sacraments, to show the falsity of the charges generally urged against them. Justin presented his second apology for christianity to Marcus Antoninus Philosophus, the successor of Pius, a determined enemy to christians. He hoped to have softened the mind of the emperor towards christians, but in vain. Shortly after this Apology, which was replete with the great truths of the gospel, and expressive of an heroic spirit in the cause of Christ, he, having been apprehended, with six of his christian companions, was brought before a Roman prefect, and examined as to his real sentiments. Justin frankly owned himself a christian, and expressed his firm attachment to Jesus Christ as his Savior, and his raised hopes of future blessedness through him, and his fixed determination not to sacrifice to idols. His companions assented to the same, and showed themselves fixed and settled in the christian faith. The prefect, seeing Justin and his companions firm in their profession, and resolutely determined not to renounce the christian religion, pronounced upon them the following sentence: "as to those who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial edicts, let them be first scourged, and then be beheaded according to the laws."

The martyrs rejoiced and blessed God, and being led back to prison were whipped and afterwards beheaded. Their dead bodies were decently interred by christian friends.

Thus slept in Jesus the christian philosopher Justin, about the year 163; and about the third or fourth year of the reign of Marcus.

CHAPTER IV.

The Emperor Marcus Antoninus and his Persecution of the Christians.

MARCUS ANTONINUS succeeded Pius in the year 161, and soon after commenced the persecution against christians, in which Justin and his friends were slain. Marcus was a prince in his general character, considerate, humane, and benificent to the rest of mankind, and yet during the whole of his reign, which continued 19 years, an implacable persecutor of christians. But why? It was not from an ignorance of their true character; but from settled opposition of heart to the holiness of the gospel, which in its nature is not only opposed to vice, in all its varieties, but utterly inconsistent with the religion of those philosophers, who form a system from natural and self-devised sources, in contempt of the revealed will of God, and the influence of his Holy Spirit. This religion is pride, and self-importance; it denies the fallen state of man, the provision and efficacy of grace, and the glory of God and the Redeemer, and is ever opposed to christianity. The enmity of this prince to christians, was, in this way, grounded in opposition to true holiness. He fancied that he carried God within himself. To be good and virtuous was, according to his self-sufficient ideas, perfectly in the power of man. It was only to follow nature. With these views, he could not be humble, nor pray earnestly, nor feel his own internal wickedness and misery, nor bear the idea of a Savior and Mediator.—His philosophic pride was wounded by the doctrines of the cross, and he sought revenge. This is the philosophy of which the apostle warns us to beware.

The sufferings of the christians, during the reign of this persecuting prince, were great. This appears from an address made to Marcus, by Melito of Sardis, published about the year 177. A part of this address deserves to be quoted on account of the justness of the sentiments, and the politeness with which they are delivered. "Pious persons, aggrieved by new edicts, published throughout Asia, and never before practised, now suffer persecution. For audacious sycophants, and men who covet other persons' goods, take advantage of these proclamations openly to rob and spoil the innocent by night and by day. If this be done by your order, let it stand good; for, a just emperor cannot act unjustly, and we will cheerfully carry away the honor of such a death; this only we humbly crave of your majesty, that, after an impartial examination of us and our accusers, you would justly decide whether we deserve death and punishment, or life and protection. But if these proceedings be not yours, and the new edicts be not the effects of your personal judgment, edicts which ought not to be enacted against barbarian enemies, in that case we entreat you not to despise us, who are unjustly oppressed." He afterwards reminds him of the justice done to christians by his two immediate predecessors.

From this account it appears, that the out-pouring of the spirit of God still continued to produce its holy fruits; that Marcus, by new edicts, commenced the persecution, and carried it on with merciless barbarity in those regions which had been relieved by Pius.

CHAPTER V.

Martyrdom of Polycarp.

POLYCARP had been familiarly conversant with the apostles, and had received the government of the church of Smyrna from those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of our Lord, and taught continually the doctrines which he had received from them. He appears to have presided over this church 74 years, and to have lived to an age extremely great. He certainly long survived his friend Ignatius, and was reserved to suffer by Marcus Antoninus.

Some time before this he came to Rome, where all the errors of Marcion had taken deep root, and was successfully employed in reclaiming many from that heresy. It was not in Marcion's power to undermine the authority of this venerable Asiatic. To procure a seeming coalition was the utmost he could expect, and it was as suitable to his views to attempt this, as it was to those of Polycarp to oppose it. Meeting him one day in the street, he called out to him, "Polycarp, own us." "I do own thee," answered the zealous Polycarp, "to be the first-born of Satan." An answer showing in what light he viewed the conduct of this arch-denier of the real Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The holiness of Polycarp's life, and the firmness with which he withstood the soothing errors of his day, which suited and fed the pride of the human heart, roused the enemies of christianity to persecute him unto death.

When apprehended by his enemies, and before the Roman proconsul, every attempt which could be made to bring him to reproach Christ and to renounce his religion was used. To all this the suffering Polycarp replied, "80 and 6 years have I served him," meaning Christ, "and he has never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?" By the vehement importunity of the infidel multitude, of

Gentiles and Jews, who dwelt at Smyrna, demanding that he should be burnt alive, Polycarp was condemned to the flames. While the preparations for his awful execution were making, he engaged in the most solemn and devout prayer, and with confidence and affection committed his soul to the care and keeping of Christ his Redeemer. The materials were placed around him, and when he had finished his prayer, and pronounced Amen aloud, the officers communicated the fatal fire. A great flame burst forth, formed an arch, and was as a wall round about the body of the martyr. This illustrious christian stood in the midst, not as burning flesh, but as gold and silver well refined. One of the officers, enraged at the astonishing sight, thrust him with his sword and at once ended his life and sufferings. His body was afterwards burnt. The credit of this account rests on the particular testimony contained in an Epistle written in the name of Polycarp's church at Smyrna.

CHAPTER VI.

The Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne.

VIENNE and Lyons were early visited with the light of the gospel. In each of these cities a church was early planted. Probably they were founded by some Asiatic Greeks.

The flame of Antoninus' persecution, reached these cities. How much they had been blessed with evangelical light and love, the accounts, which we have of their sufferings in the cause of Christ, fully evince.—The calamities which they endured, and the manner they sustained them, appear by the following Epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia.

"The servants of Christ, sojourning in Vienne and Lyons in France, to the brethren in Asia Propria and Phrygia, who have the same faith and hope of redemption with us, peace, and grace, and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are not competent to describe with accuracy, nor is it in our power to express the greatness of the affliction sustained here by the saints, the intense animosity of the heathen against them, and the complicated sufferings of the blessed martyrs. The grand enemy assaulted us with all his might, and by his first essays exhibited intentions of exercising malice without limits and without controul. He left no method untried to habituate his slaves to his bloody work, and to prepare them by previous exercises against the servants of God. Christians were absolutely prohibited from appearing in any houses, except their own, in baths, in the market, or in any place whatever. The grace of God, however, fought for us, preserving the weak and exposing the strong, who like pillars, were able to withstand him in patience, and to draw the whole fury of the wicked against themselves. These entered into the contest, sustaining every species of pain and reproach. What was heavy to others, to them was light, while they were hastening to Christ, evincing indeed, that *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* The first trial was from the people at large; shouts, blows, the dragging of their bodies, the plundering of their goods, casting of stones, and the confining of them within their own houses, and all the indignities which may be expected from a fierce and outrageous multitude, these were magnanimously sustained. And now, being led into the forum by the tribune and the magistrates, they were examined before all the people, whether they were christians, and, on pleading guilty, were shut up in prison till the arrival of the governor. Before him they were at length brought, and he treated them with great savageness of manners. The spirit of Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, was roused; a man full of charity both to God and man, whose conduct was so exemplary, though but a youth, that he might justly be compared to old Zacharias; for he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, a man ever unwearied in acts of beneficence to his neighbors, full of zeal towards God, and fervent in spirit. He could not bear to see so manifest a perversion of justice; but, being moved with indignation, he demanded to be heard in behalf of the brethren, and pledged himself to prove that there was nothing atheistical or impious among them, those about the tribunal shouting against him, for he was a man of quality, and the governor being impatient of so equitable a demand, and only asking him if he were a christian, and he confessing in the most open manner, the consequence was, that he was ranked among the martrys. He was called, indeed the advocate of the christians; but he had an advocate within, the Holy Spirit, more abundantly than Zacharias, which he demonstrated by the fulness of his charity, cheerfully laying down his life in defence of his brethren; for he was, and is still, a genuine disciple of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. The rest began now to be distinguished. The capital martrys appeared indeed ready for the contest, and discharged their part with all alacrity of mind. Others appeared also unready, unexcercised, and as yet weak, unable to sustain the shock of such a contest: of these, ten in number lapsed, whose case filled us with great grief and unmeasurable sorrow, and dejected the spirits of those who had not yet been apprehended, who, though they sustained all indignities, yet deserted not the martyrs in their distress. Then we were all much alarmed, because of the uncertain event of confession, not that we dreaded the torments with which we were threatened, but because we looked forward unto the end, and feared the danger of apostacy. Persons were now apprehended daily of such as were counted worthy to fill up the number of the lapsed, so that the most excellent were selected from the two churches, even those by whose labor they had been founded and established. There were seized at the same time some of our heathen servants, (for the governor had openly ordered us all to be sought for) who by the impulse of Satan, fearing the torments which they saw inflicted on the saints, on the suggestion of the soldiers, accused us of eating human flesh, and of unnatural mixtures, and of things not fit even to be mentioned or imagined, and such as ought not to be believed of mankind.—These things being divulged, all were incensed even to madness against us; so that if some were formerly more moderate on account of any connexions of blood, affinity, or friendship, they were then transported beyond all bounds with indignation. Now it was that our Lord's word was fulfilled, "*The time will come when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*"—The holy martyrs now sustained tortures which exceed the powers of description; Satan labouring, by means of them, to extort something slanderous to christanity. The whole fury of the multitude, the governor, and the soldiers, was spent in a particular manner on Sanctus of Vienne, the deacon, and on Maturus, a late convert indeed, but a magnanimous wrestler, and on Attalus of Pergamus, a man who had ever been the pillar and support of our church, and on Blandina, through whom Christ shewed, that those things, that appear unsightly and contemptible among men, are most honorable in the presence of God, on account of love to his name exhibited in real energy, and not boasting in pompous pretences. For while we all feared, and among the rest her mistress, according to the flesh, herself one of the noble army of martyrs, was afraid that she would not be able to witness a good confession, because of the weakness of her body, Blandina was endued with so much fortitude, that those who successively tortured her from morning to night, were quite worn out with fatigue, and owned themselves conquered and exhausted of their whole apparatus of tortures, and were amazed to see her still breathing, whilst her body was torn and laid open, and confessed that one species of torture had been sufficient to despatch her, much more so great a variety as had been applied. But the blessed woman, as a generous wrestler, recovered fresh vigor in the act of confession; and it was an evident refreshment, support, and an annihilation of all her pains to say "*I am a christian and no evil is committed* "*among us.*

"In the mean time Sanctus, having sustained, in a manner more than human, the most barbarous indignities, while the impious hoped to extort from him something injurious to the gospel, from the duration and intenseness of his sufferings, resisted with so much firmness, that he would neither tell his own name, nor that of his nation or state, nor whether he was a freeman or a slave ; but to every interrogatory he answered in Latin, "*I am a christian.*" This he repeatedly owned was to him both name, and state, and race, and every thing, and nothing else could the heathen draw from him. Hence the indignation of the governor and the torturers was fiercely levelled against him, so that having exhausted all the usual methods of torture, they at last fixed brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body. These were scorched of course, and yet he remained upright and inflexible, firm in his confession, being bedewed and refreshed from the heavenly fountain of the water of life. His body witnessed indeed the ghastly tortures which he had sustained, being one continued wound and bruise, altogether contracted, and no longer retaining the form of a human creature ; in whom Christ suffering wrought great wonders, confounding the adversary, and shewing, for the encouragement of the rest, that nothing is to be feared where the love of the Father is ; nothing painful where the glory of Christ is exhibited. For while the impious imagined, when after some days they renewed his tortures, that a fresh application of the same methods of punishment to his wounds, now swollen and inflamed, must either overcome his constancy, or, by despatching him on the spot, strike a terror into the rest, as he could not even bear to be touched by the hand, this was so far from being the case, that contrary to all expectation, his body recovered its natural position in the second course of torture ; he was restored to his former shape and the use of his limbs ; so that, by the grace of Christ, it proved not a punishment, but a cure !"

Biblias, a woman, who had denied Christ, was led to the torture, and though at first she accused the christians of horrid impieties, yet in the midst of her tortures, being admonished by a temporary punishment of the danger of eternal fire in hell, she recovered from her apostacy, professed herself a christian, and was added to the army of martyrs.

Many christians were thurst into the darkest and most noisome parts of the prison, where they suffered all the indignities which diabolical malice could inflict. Many were suffocated. Others, though greatly afflicted, remained alive, strengthened by the Lord, and comforted and encouraged one another to constancy in the christain faith.

Pothinas, bishop of Lyons, upwards of ninety years of age, very infirm and asthmatic, panting after martyrdom, was called to suffer. After a great variety of abuse, both from the populace and the magistrates, he was thrown into prison, and after two days expired.

Those, who had denied Christ, were not by their denial of him exempt from persecution. But in their sufferings they had not the supports which others, who stood firm in the faith, experienced. They went to execution with guilt depicted in their countenances, dejected, spiritless and forlorn. The heathen insulted them as cowards and poltroons, and treated them as murderers: thus seeking to save their lives they lost them, and failed of receiving the consolations of the religion which they had renounced.

The heathen denied the rites of interment to those who suffered martyrdom. After having treated them with many indignities, they burnt them to ashes, and to prevent their resurrection, and to deter others from the hope of a future life, cast their ashes into the river Rhone; adding, "Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God can help them and deliver them out of our hands."

In all their great sufferings, those martyrs were humble, peaceable, meek and patient; evincing that they felt the power of religion, and that they loved the Savior, and had the special supports of his spirit.

CHAPTER VII.

The State of Christians under the reign of Commodus, and the story of Pereginus.

THE reign of Commodus is remarkable for the peace granted to the church of Christ through the world. The means used by Divine Providence for this purpose are more marvellous. Marcia, a woman of low rank, was the favorite concubine of this emperor. She had a predilection for the christians, and employed her interest with Commodus in their favor. Though Commodus was extremely vicious and profligate, yet under his reign God gave his church a breathing time of twelve years. The gospel now flourished abundantly, and many of the nobility of Rome, with their whole families, embraced it. The envy of the great was hereby excited. The Roman senate felt its dignity defiled by innovations, in their view, extremely contemptible, and to support their injured honor, had recourse to persecution.

Apollonius, a person renowned for learning and philosophy, at that time in Rome, was a sincere christian. He was accused by an informer before Perennis the judge, a person of considerable influence in the reign of Commodus. According to thelaw of Antoninus Pius, which had been revived by Commodus, requiring that the accusers of christians should be put to death, Perennis, sentenced the accuser, and his legs were broken. In this, he obeyed the dictates of the law; in what follows, he obeyed the dictates of his own malice, or rather that of the senate.—The prisoner was required to give an account of his faith before the senate and the court. He complied, and delivered an apology for christianity, and by a decree of the senate was beheaded. This is perhaps the only trial we read of in which both accuser and accused suffered judicially. Eusebius observes, that the laws, commanding christians, who had been presented before the tribunal, to be put to death, were still in force. But Adrian, or certainly Antoninus Pius, had abrogated this iniquitous edict of Trajan. Under Marcus it might have been revived, for he was very bitter in his feelings against religion. Now Commodus, by menacing persecutors with death, might have supposed, he had hereby sufficiently secured the lives of christians. Yet, if a formal abrogation of the law against them had been neglected, one may see how Apollonius come to suffer, as well as his adversary. This distinguished man lost his life by vindicating that cause which is able to secure to him eternal life, and adhered to HIM who keeps by his power, through faith in his name, unto salvation, all who put their trust in him.

There is a remarkable story of one Peregrinus, in the works of Lucian, which, as it falls in with this century, and shows the character of christians, who then lived, deserves here to be introduced. "In his youth he fell into shameful crimes, for which he was near loosing his life in Armenia and Asia. I will not dwell on those crimes; but I am persuaded that what I am about to say, is worthy of attention. There are none of you but know, that being chagrined that his father was still alive after being turned of sixty years of age, he strangled him. The rumor of so black a crime being spread abroad, he betrayed his guilt by flight. He wandered about in divers countries to conceal the place of his retreat, till, upon coming into Judea, he learnt the admirable doctrines of christianity, by conversing with pastors and teachers. In a little time he shewed them that they were but children compared with him; for he became not only a prophet, but the head of their congregation: in a word, he was every thing to them; he explained their books and composed some himself; insomuch that they spoke of him as a god, and considered him as their law-giver and ruler. However, these people adore that Great Person who had been crucified in Palestine, as being the first who taught men that religion. While these things were going on, Peregrinus was apprehended and put in prison on account of his being a christian. This disgrace loaded him with honor, the very thing he ardently desired, made him more reputable among those of that persuasion, and furnished him with a power of performing wonders. The christians, grievously afflicted at his confinement, used their utmost endeavors to procure his liberty; and as they saw they could not compass it, they provided abundantly for all his wants, and rendered him all imaginable services. There was seen, by break of day, at the prison-gate, a company of old women, widows and orphans, some of whom, after having corrupted the guard with money, passed the night with him; there they partook together of elegant repasts and entertained one another with religious discourses. They called that excellent man the new Socrates. There came christians, deputed even from many cities of Asia, to converse with him, to comfort him, and to bring him supplies of money; for the care and diligence which the christians manifest in these junctures, are incredible; they spare nothing in these cases; they sent therefore large sums to Peregrinus, and his confinement was to him an occasion of amassing great riches; for these poor creatures are firmly persuaded they shall one day enjoy immortal life; Therefore they despise death with wonderful courage, and offer themselves voluntarily to punishment. Their first Lawgiver has put it into their heads that they are all brethren, since they separated from us, they persevere in rejecting the gods of the Grecians, and worshipping that Deceiver, who was crucified; they regulate their manners and conduct by his laws; they despise, therefore, all earthly possessions, and enjoy them in common. Therefore if any magician or juggler, any cunning fellow who knows how to make his advantage of opportunity, happens to get into their society, he immediately grows rich; because it is easy for a man of this sort to abuse the simplicity of these silly people. However Peregrinus was set at liberty by the president of Syria, who was a lover of philosophers and its professors, and who, having perceived that this man courted death out of vanity and fondness for re-down, released him, despising him too much to have a desire of inflicting capital punishment on him. Peregrinus returned into his own country, and as some were inclined to prosecute him on account of his paricide, he gave all his wealth to his fellow citizens, who, being gained by this liberality, imposed silence on his accusers. He left his country a second time in order to travel, reckoning he should find every thing he wanted in the purses of the christians, who were punctual in accompanying him wherever he went, and supplied him with all things in abundance. He subsisted in this manner for some time; but having done something which the christians abhor, (they saw him, I think, make use of some meats forbidden among them) he was abandoned by them; insomuch that having not any longer the means of support, he would fain have revoked the donation he had made to his country."

The native place of this extraordinary man was Parium in Mysia. After his renunciation of christianity he assumed the character of a philosopher. In that light he is mentioned by several heathen authors; and this part he acted, till the time of his death, when, in his old age, he threw himself into the flames, probably because suicide was honorable in the eyes of the Gentiles, and because Empedocles, a brother philosopher, had thrown himself into the volcano at Mount Ætna.

A remark or two must be made on the writer, the hero, and the christians of those times.

It is to be remembered that the railleries, cavils and insinuations against them in this narrative, come from a rancorous enemy; from Lucian, a learned heathen, who manifested a malignant hatred against christians and their holy religion.

Peregrinus is no uncommon character. His early life was nothing but evil, afterward he assumed, merely for selfish purposes, something of the garb and appearance of christianity, which he wore with consummate address, and imposed on genuine christians of undoubted discernment. The savage heart of Lucian seems to have rejoiced in the impositions of Peregrinus, and particularly that he was able to deceive so long and so completely. He does not appear to have mourned over his superlative wickedness, but to have rejoiced in it.

Peregrinus lived long enough to appear a complete impostor, and to be universally rejected by the brethren. He afterward became a professed philosopher. What is called philosophy is consistent with hypocrisy, and his dreadful end should be awfully instructive to mankind.

Yet, what is there in all this account of the christians, discolored as it is by the malignant author, which does not redound to their honor? While Peregrinus made a creditable profession of religion, they received him with cordiality; they did not pretend to infallibility. Their conduct toward this base impostor, surely deserved high applause, rather than censure. Their liberality, zeal, compassion, brotherly love, fortitude, and heavenly-mindedness, appear, from this narrative, to have been exceedingly great. It is also evident that christians were then in morals much superior to the rest of mankind; and it is lamentable that Lucian, who could relate this, had not the wisdom to make a profitable use of it for himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

Some account of Christian Authors who flourished in this Century.

IT may throw some additional light on the history of christian doctrine and manners in this century, to give a brief view of its eminent writers. Some of the most renowned have already been noticed; a few more of great respectability shall be deferred to the next century, because they out-lived this.

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, lived under the reign of Marcus Antoninus and his son Commodus. He wrote to the Lacedemonians concerning the doctrine of the gospel, and an exhortation to peace and unity;

also, to the Athenians; by his testimony we learn that Dionysius, the Areopagite, was the first bishop of Athens. In his letter to the christians in Crete he highly commends Philip the bishop, and guards them against errors. In his Epistle to the churches of Pontus, he directs that all penitents should be received who returned to the church, whatever their past crimes may have been, even if guilty of heresy itself. From these Epistles we infer that Corinth was singularly blessed with the labors of so faithful and zealous a pastor, and that gospel-discipline was as yet administered with much strictness in the churches, and that purity of doctrine, as well as of life and manners, was still considered to be of high importance.

From his Epistle to Pinytus, bishop of the Gnessians in Crete, advising him not to impose on the christians the heavy burden of the obligation to preserve their virginity, it appears that monastic austerities were beginning to appear in the churches, and that the best men, after the example of the apostles, endeavored to control them. Pinytus, in his reply, manifests his knowledge of true godliness by requesting Dionysius to afford his people more solid nourishment, and to send frequent letters to him which might fill his congregation, lest being always fed with milk, they should remain in a state of infancy.

In his letter to the Romans, addressed to Soter their bishop, he recommended to them a charitable custom, which, from their first plantation, they had always practised, which was to send relief to diverse churches throughout the world, and to assist particularly those who were condemned to the mines; a strong proof, both that the Roman church continued opulent and numerous, and also that they still partook much of the spirit of Christ.

Theophilus, of Antioch, was brought up a Gentile, was educated in all the knowledge then reputable in the world, and was a man of considerable parts and learning. His philosophic turn of mind long impeded his reception of the scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, and consequently of the gospel itself. But the grace of God, while it convinced him of his inability to dispel his own doubts, effectually instructed his understanding. He was valiant against the fashionable heresies of the times in which he lived. After having been bishop of the church of Antioch 13 years, he died in peace about the second or third year of Commodus.

Melito, bishop of Sardis, gives us a catalogue of the sacred books of the Old Testament. The most of his writings are lost. In one extant, he declares, that the christians do not adore insensible stones, but that they worship only one God, who is before all things and in all things, and Jesus Christ who is God before all ages. Melito died and was buried at Sardis.

Bardasanes, of Mesopotamia, was renowned for learning and eloquence. A remarkable passage from him, preserved by Eusebius, shows the great progress and energy of christianity, in this century.

"In Parthia," says he, "polygamy is allowed and practised, but the christians of Parthia practise it not. In Persia the same may be said with respect to incest. In Bartria, and in Gaul the rights of matrimony are defiled with impunity. The christians there act not thus. In truth, wherever they reside, they triumph, in their practice, over the worst of laws and the worst of customs."

Miltiades distinguished himself by writing in defence of christianity. He assures us that the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit had not ceased at that time, but were very common in the christian church.

Athenagoras, toward the latter end of this century, wrote an apology for the christian religion. His testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity, in this apology expresses something more than a speculative belief of it, and that he considered it to be essential to practical godliness. From his representation of the faith and practices of real christians, in his day, it appears, that they found, in their view of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the truths of the gospel, which are so closely interwoven with the doctrine of the Trinity, something which warmed their hearts, and raised their affections from earth to heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

The Heresies and Controversies of this Century reviewed, and some Account of the Progress of Christianity during the course of it.

THE first heretics of this century were those who opposed or corrupted the doctrine of the real and proper Divinity of Christ. Victor, bishop, or pastor, of the church of Rome, near the close of the century, excommunicated Theodotus, the father of this apostacy, who denied the Divinity of Christ, because he first affirmed Christ to be only man. It appears that a denial of the Deity of Christ could not find a patron, that was suffered to remain in the church, in the course of the first two hundred years.—Every christian, of any eminence for judgment and piety, unequivocally held an opposite language.

This Theodotus was a citizen of Byzantium, a tanner, but a man of parts and learning. In his speculations, he felt himself important enough to dare to be singular, and revived the heresy of Ebion. He was brought with some christians before persecuting magistrates. His campanions honestly confessed their Lord and suffered. He was the only man of the company who denied him. In truth he had no principles strong enough to induce him to bear the cross. Theodotus lived still a denier of Christ, and being afterward upbraided for denying his God, "No" says he, "I have not denied God, but man, for Christ is no more." His heresy hence obtained a new name, that of the God-denying apostacy.

Toward the close of this century, the controversy concerning the proper time of the observation of Easter, was unhappily revived. Synods were held concerning it, and uniformity was attempted in vain throughout the church. Victor, of Rome, with much arrogance and temerity, inveighed against the Asiatic churches, and pronounced the sentence of excommunication. This contention was, however, with much difficulty, ended by the prudent measures used by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who rebuked the uncharitable spirit of Victor, and pressed upon all concerned the great duty of christian love and unity.

That this controversy should appear to be a matter of such great moment, at this time, proves that the power of true godliness had already suffered considerable declension. When faith and love are simple, strong, and active in an eminent degree, such subjects of debate are ever known to vanish as mists before the sun.

The Montanists, an heretical sect, gave the church of Christ much trouble. Their leader, Montanus, first began his frantic career in Phrygia. He pretended to prophecy, that he was the Paraclete, or Comforter, whom Christ, at his departure from earth, promised to send to his disciples to lead them into all truth.—He declared himself sent with a divine commission to give to the moral precepts, delivered by Christ and his apostles, the finishing *touch*, which was to bring them to perfection. He urged many things not inculcated in the word of God, gave it as his opinion that whatever savored of polite literature, should be banished from the christian church. The followers of Montanus took upon them to revile every church under heaven, which did not pay homage to their pretended inspirations. Few of the Phrygians were seduced.—The faithful, throughout Asia, in frequent synods, examined and condemned the heresy.

The deceit of philosophy formed the last corruption of this century. This appeared at Alexandria, which was then highly renowned for learning. There, certain philosophers, who called themselves *Eclectics*, appeared. They pretended to confine themselves to no particular set of rules, but to choose what they judged most agreeable to truth from different masters and sects. Their prominent sentiments were, that all religions, vulgar and philosophical, Grecian and Barbarian, Jewish and Gentile, virtually meant the same thing. The most famous of these philosophers was Ammonius

Saccas, an Alexandrian teacher. Plato was his principal guide. Saccas was an ambiguous character, a kind of Pagano-christian. These philosophers appear to have complimented christianity with some respectful attention, and yet studiously to have avoided the cross of Christ, and the precise peculiarities of the gospel, to preserve their credit with the world.

Under the fostering hand of Ammonius and his followers, fictitious holiness was formed into a system, and generated the worst of evils under the form of eminent sanctity. That man is altogether fallen, that he is to be justified wholly by the faith of Christ, that his atonement and mediation alone procure us access to God and eternal life, that holiness is the effect of Divine grace, and is the proper work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man; these, and if there are any other similar evangelical truths, as it was not possible to mix them with Platonism, faded gradually of themselves in the church, and were at length partly denied, and partly forgotten.

By the ambitious intrusions of self-righteousness, argumentative refinements, and Pharisaic pride, the Spirit of God was grieved, and godliness, in the professed friends of Christ, began in this century to decay. Yet the effects of the first out-pouring of the Spirit, and some rich communications of the same Spirit, will appear in the third century.

CENTURY III.

CHAPTER I.

Irenæus.

BEFORE we proceed with the orderly course of events in the third century, it may be convenient to continue the accounts of authors belonging to the last, whose deaths happened in this. We meet with four celebrated men of this description; Irenæus, Tertullian, Pantænus, and Clement of Alexandria.

Irenæus, was instructed in christianity by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, and the renowned Polycarp, both disciples of St. John. After the death of Pothinus, he succeeded him in the pastoral charge of the church of Lyons. Never was any pastor more severely tried by a tempestuous scene. Violent persecution without, and subtle heresies within, called for the exertion, at once, of consummate dexterity and magnanimous resolution. Irenæus was favored with a measure of both, and weathered the storm. But heresy proved a more constant enemy than persecution. The multiplication of it, in endless refinements, induced him to write his book against heresies, which must have been at that time a very seasonable work. The beginning of the third century was marked with persecution under Septimius Severus, the successor of Julian. In this, we are informed, Irenæus was put to death, and with him, almost all the christians of the populous city of Lyons.

It is no small instance of charity and deep humility in this great man, that for the love of souls, he labored long among the Gauls while they were mere barbarians, learned their rude dialect and conformed to their rustic manners, to bring them to a knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ. His labors among them were doubtless of the most solid utility.

He agrees with all the primitive christians in the doctrine of the Trinity, and makes use of the 45th Psalm particularly to prove the Deity of Jesus Christ. He is no less sound and clear in his views of the incarnation; and in general, notwithstanding some philosophical adulterations, certainly maintained all the essentials of the gospel.

CHAPTER II.

Tertullian.

THE Roman province of Asia, in the second century, abounded with christians. Of the manner of the introduction of the gospel into that province, and of the proceedings of its first planters, we have no account. The famous Tertullian, the first Latin writer of the church, whose works have come down to us, flourished at Carthage, in the latter part of the second and in the beginning of the third century. In his day the subtle spirit of self-righteousness appears to have overspread the African church. But little matter of useful instruction is to be found in Tertullian's large collection of treatises, all professedly on christian subjects. Most of his precepts carried rather a stoical than a christian appearance. He embraced the heresy of the Montanists, joined them, wrote in their defence, and treated the body of christians, from whom he separated, with much contempt. His views of the Trinity, were, however, very clear and sound. He speaks of the Trinity in Unity, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, yet one God." He speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as both God and man, Son of man and Son of God, and called Jesus Christ. He speaks also of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Sanctifier of those who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He testifies that this rule of faith had obtained from the beginning of the gospel. His Montanism lessens not the credibility of his testimony as to these things.

Tertullian wrote an apology for christianity, in which he gives a view of the manners and spirit of the christians of his time. A few quotations may illustrate the subject, and shew the nature and effect of real christianity;

"We pray," says he, "for the safety of the emperor, to the eternal God, the true, the living God, whom emperors would desire to be propitious to them above all others who are called gods. We, looking up to heaven with out-stretched hands, because they are harmless; with naked heads, because we are not ashamed; without a prompter, because we pray from the heart; we constantly pray for all emperors, that they may have a long life, a secure empire, a safe house, strong armies, a faithful senate, a well moralized people, a quiet state of the world, whatever Cæsar would wish for himself in his public and private capacity. I cannot solicit these things from any other than from Him, from whom, I know, I shall obtain them, because he alone can do these things, and I am he who may expect them of him, being his servant, who worship him alone, and lose my life for his service. Thus then let the hoofs pierce us, while our hands are stretched out to God, let crosses suspend us, let fires consume us, let swords pierce our breasts, let wild beasts trample upon us. A praying christian is in a frame for enduring any thing. Act in this manner, ye generous rulers; kill the soul who supplicates God for the emperor.—Were we disposed to return evil for evil, it were easy for us to revenge the injuries which we sustain. But, God forbid, that his people should vindicate themselves by human fire, or be reluctant to endure that by which their sincerity is evinced. Were we disposed to act the part, I will not say of secret assassins, but of open enemies, should we want forces and numbers? Are we not dispersed through the world? It is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your places, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, councils, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum. We leave you only your temples. To what war should we not be ready and well prepared, even though unequal in numbers, we who die with so much pleasure, were it not that our religion requires us rather to suffer death than to inflict it? Were we to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude. We are dead to all ideas of honor and dignity; nothing is more foreign to us than political concerns. The whole world is our republic.

We are a body united in one bond of religion, discipline and hope. We meet in our assemblies for prayer. We are compelled to have recourse to the Divine oracles for caution and recollection on all occasions. We nourish our faith by the word of God, we erect our hope, we fix our confidence, we strengthen our discipline by repeatedly inculcating precepts, exhortations, corrections, and excommunication, when it is needful. This last, as being in the sight of God, is of great weight, and is a strong prejudice of the future judgment, if any behave in so scandalous a manner as to be debarred from holy communion. Those who preside among us are elderly persons, not distinguished for opulence, but worth of character. Every one pays into the public chest once a month, or when he pleases, and according to his ability and inclination; for there is no compulsion. These are, as it were, the deposits of piety. Hence we relieve and bury the needy, support orphans and decripped persons, those who have suffered shipwreck, and those, who, for the word of God, are condemned to the mines, or imprisonment. This very charity of ours has caused us to be noticed by some; see, say they, how they love one another."

Tertullian afterwards takes notice of the great readiness with which christians paid the taxes to government, in opposition to the spirit of fraud and deceit, with which so many acted in these matters. But I must not enlarge; the reader may form an idea of the purity, integrity, heavenly-mindedness, and passiveness under injuries, for which the first christians were so renowned.

CHAPTER III.

Pantænus.

ALEXANDRIA, the Metropolis of Egypt, piqued itself on its superior erudition. From the days of St. Mark, who first planted the gospel in this city, a christian catechetical school appears to have been supported here. Pantænus was the first master of it of whom we have any account. He had received by tradition the true doctrine, from the apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul; but his religious views were unquestionably clouded with the system of Ammonius Saccas, which embraced all sorts of sentiments, as virtually meaning the same thing. For ten years he laboriously discharged the office of catechist in this school, and freely taught all who desired him.

Some Indian ambassadors, from what part of India they came, it is not easy to determine, entreated Demetrius, then bishop of Alexandria, to send them some worthy person to preach the faith in their country. Pantænus was fixed on as the person. He freely complied with this call. In the discharge of this mission, his hardships must have been great. His labors among ignorant Indians, where neither fame, nor ease, nor profit were attainable, clearly evinced that he was possessed of the spirit of the gospel. What success attended his mission, we are not informed. We are told, he found in India the gospel of St. Matthew, which had been carried thither by the Apostle Bartholomew, who had first preached among them. I mention this, but much doubt the truth of it. He lived to return to Alexandria, and resumed his catechetical office. He died not long after the commencement of the third century. He used to instruct more by word than by writing. Candor requires us to look upon him as a sincere christian, though his views appear to have been some what confused by that philosophy which had contaminated most of the learned at Alexandria.

CHAPTER IV.

Clemens Alexandrinus.

HE was of the *Electic* sect, a scholar of Pantænus, and of the same philosophical cast of mind. He ascribed too much to the wisdom of this world, and did not duly consider that "the world by wisdom knew not God." He succeeded his master Pantænus in the catechetical school, and under him were bred the famous Origen, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and other eminent men.

Fancying that Gentile philosophy had first taught him true wisdom, he says, that as the husbandman first waters the soil and then casts in the seed, so the notions he derived from the writings of the Gentiles, served first to water and soften the earthy parts of the soul, that the spiritual seed might be cast in, and take vital root in the minds of men. This is however not a christian dialect, but mere Gentilism. It is not grounding our religion on the truth of Divine revelation, but on that philosophy which feeds the pride of the depraved heart, and lulls it into security in self-righteousness, by the blandishments ofmere reason;—"vain man would be wise."

Besides the office of catechist, Clemens was made presbyter in the church of Alexandria. During the persecution under Severus, he appears to have visited the East, and to have had some intimacy with Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, he went to Antioch, and afterward returned to his charge at Alexandria. The time of his death is uncertain. The philosophy, to which he was so much addicted, must have darkened his views of some of the most precious truths of the gospel, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Amidst all his confused ideas of christian doctrines, he appears to have had some correct sentiments concerning the Redeemer, and the way of life and salvation through him. The danger of admitting the pestilent spirit of human self-sufficiency, to dictate to us what to believe and what to practise in the infinite concerns of religion, is awfully great.

CHAPTER V.

The affairs of the church during the reign of Severus and Caracalla.

THE lives of the four persons, we have reviewed, seem proper to be prefixed to the general history of the third century, partly, because they were studious men, not very much connected with the public state of christianity; partly, because their views and taste in religion being known, may prepare the reader to expect that unhappy mixture of philosophical self-righteousness and superstition, which much clouded the light of the gospel in this century

Severus, though in his younger days, a bitter persecutor of christians at Lyons, was yet, through the influence of the kindness he had received from Proculus, favorably disposed toward them. Proculus, a christian, had cured him of a disorder by the use of oil. Severus felt the kindness, and kept him in his palace till his death. It was not till about the tenth year of his reign, which falls in with the year two hundred and two, that his native ferocity of temper broke out afresh, in kindling a very severe persecution against the christians. Having just returned victorious, from the East, the pride of prosperity induced him to forbid the propagation of the gospel. Christians still thought it right to obey God rather than man. Severus would be obeyed, and exercised the usual cruelties. Persecution raged every where, particularly at Alexandria. Thither, the christians were brought, from various parts of Egypt, to suffer, and expired in torments. Of this number was Leonidas, father of the famous Origen. He was beheaded and left his son very young. Great numbers now suffered martyrdom. Young Origen panted for the honor and needlessly exposed himself to danger. His mother checked his imprudent zeal, at first, by earnest entreaties; but perceiving him bent on suffering with his father, who was then closely confined, she very properly exercised her motherly authority by confining him to the house, and hiding from him all his apparel. Origen's vehement spirit now prompted him to address a letter to his father, in which he thus exhorts him, "Father, faint not, and do not be concerned on our account." This ardent youth had been carefully instructed in the scriptures by his pious father, who gave him daily, a task out of them to learn and repeat. While in this employment Origen strove to investigate the abstruse sense of the holy word, and often asked his father questions beyond his ability to solve. The father checked his curiosity, reminded him of his imbecility, and admonished him to be content with the plain, obvious and grammatical meaning; but inwardly rejoiced that God had given him such a son. His rejoicing should have been, perhaps it was, with trembling; and Origen's early loss of such a father, who was probably more simple in christian faith and piety than he himself ever was, might have been an extreme disadvantage to him.

Origen early possessed that presumptuous spirit which led him afterwards to philosophize so dangerously in the christian religion, as never to content himself with plain truth, but to hunt after something singular and extraordinary; though it must be acknowledged his sincere desire of serving God appeared from early life; nor does it ever seem to have forsaken him, so that he may be considered a child of God from early years.

At the age of seventeen he was left an orphan.—His father's estate was, by the emperor, confiscated; But Providence gave him a friend, in a rich and godly matron, who also supported in her house a person noted for heresy. Her motives for this we cannot assign. Origen, though obliged to be in his company, could not be prevailed on to join with him in prayer. Having soon acquired all the learning his master could give him, and finding that the business of catechizing was deserted at Alexandria, he undertook the work himself, and several Gentiles heard him and became his disciples. He was now in his eighteenth year, and in the heat of the persecution distinguished himself by his attachment to the martyrs, not only those of his acquaintance, but in general those who suffered for christianity. Such, as were fettered in deep dungeons and close imprisonment, he visited, was present with them after their condemnation, boldly attended them to the place of execution, openly embracing and saluting them, at the great peril of his own life. He was frequently exposed to imminent danger, and soldiers were commanded to watch about his house, because of the multitudes that crowded thither for instruction. As the persecution increased, he found his life in danger, could not pass the streets of Alexandria in safety, often changed his lodgings, and was every where pursued; yet his instructions had great effect, and his zeal incited numbers to attend to christianity.

He now appropriated his school wholly to religious instruction, and maintained himself by the sale of the profane books which he had been wont to study. Thus he lived, many years, an amazing monument of industry and self-denial. Not only the day, but the greater part of the night was devoted to religious study, and he practised, with literal conscientiousness, our Lord's rules of not having two coats, nor shoes, nor providing for futurity. With cold, nakedness and poverty, he was familiar, offended many by his unwillingness to receive their gratuities, abstained from wine, lived many years without the use of shoes, and was so abstemious as to endanger his life. Many imitated his excessive austerities, and were honored with the name of philosophers, and some of his followers patiently suffered even martyrdom.

The judgment of these Alexandrian christians appears not to have been very solid. A strong spirit of self-righteousness, connected with a secret ambition, too subtle to be perceived by those who were the dupes of it, led to many austerities, which in their estimation appertained to religion, but were nothing more than will-worship, the mere exuberances of a zeal which is not according to knowledge; yet may we hope there was some real piety among them.

An action performed about this time by Origen illustrates his character, in the strongest manner.—Though much disposed to consider the scriptures as allegories, yet in one passage he followed the literal sense too closely. "There are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." Being much conversant among women as well as men, in his work of catechising and expounding the scriptures, he was thus desirous of preventing all temptations, and avoiding the slanders of infidels. But though he practised this upon himself, he took all possible pains to conceal the fact from his familiar friends.

One cannot but be astonished at the strong self-righteous maxims and views which were in the church; but who, except those that are lost to all sense of goodness, will not revere the piety of his motives and the fervor of his zeal? It could not, however, be concealed. Demetrius, his bishop, at first encouraged and commended him; afterwards, through the power of envy, on account of his growing popularity, he published the fact abroad with a view to calumniate him. However, the bishops of Cæsarea and Jerusalem protected and supported him, and ordained him a presbyter in the church. Day and night he continued still to labor at Alexandria. But it is time to look into other parts of the Roman empire, and take a more general view of the effects of the persecution.

Alexander, a bishop in Capadocia, confessed the faith of Christ, and sustained a variety of sufferings, and yet by the providence of God was delivered, and travelled afterwards to Jerusalem.

In Africa too, persecution raged, during the time of Severus. Twelve persons were brought before Saterninus, the pro-consul, at Carthage, the chief of whom were Speratus, Narzal, and Cittin, and three women, Donata, Secunda, and Vestina. The pro-consul said to them all, "You may expect the emperor our master's pardon, if you return to your senses, and observe the ceremonies of our gods." To which Speratus replied, "We have never been guilty of any thing that is evil, nor been partakers of injustice. We have even prayed for those who persecute us unjustly; in which we obey OUR EMPEROR,* who prescribed to us this rule of behavior. Saturninus answered, "We have also a religion that is simple, we swear by the genius of the emperors, and we offer up vows for their health, which you ought also to do."—Speratus answered, "If you will hear me peaceably, I will declare unto you the mystery of christian simplicity." The pro-consul said, "Shall I hear you speak ill of our ceremonies? rather swear all of you, by the genius of the emperors our masters, that you may enjoy the pleasures of life." Speratus answered, "I know not the genius of the emperors. I serve God, who is in the heavens, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. I have never been guilty of any crime punishable by the public laws; if I buy any thing, I pay the duties to the collectors; I acknowledge my God and Savior to be the Emperor of all nations; I have made no complaints against any person, and therefore they ought to make none against me." The pro-consul, turning to the rest, said, "Do not ye imitate the folly of this mad wretch, but rather fear our prince and obey his commands." Cittin answered, "We fear only the Lord our God, who is in heaven." The pro-consul then said, "Let them be carried to prison, and put in fetters till to-morrow."

The next day, being seated on his tribunal, he caused them to be brought before him, and said to the women, "Honor our prince, and do sacrifice to the gods." Donata replied, "We honor Cæsar as Cæsar; but to God we offer prayers and worship."—Vestina said, "I also am a christian." Secunda said, "I also believe in my God, and will continue steadfast to him; and as for your gods, we will not serve and adore them." The pro-consul ordered them to be separated; then having called for the men, he said to

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* Christ.

Speratus, "Perseverest thou in being a christian?"—Speratus answered, "Yes, I do persevere; let all give ear; I am a christian;" which being heard by the rest they said, "We also are christians." The pro-consul said, "You will neither consider nor receive mercy." They replied, "Do what you please, we shall die joyfully for the sake of Jesus Christ." The pro-consul asked, "What books are those which you read and revere?" Speratus replied, "The four gospels of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Epistles of the apostle St. Paul, and all the scripture that is inspired of God." The pro-consul said, "I will give you three days to come to yourselves." Upon which Speratus answered, "I am a christian, and such are all those who are with me, and we will never quit the faith of our Lord Jesus; do, therefore, what you think fit."

The pro-consul seeing their resolution, pronounced sentence against them, that they should die by the hands of the executioner, in these terms; "Speratus, &c. having acknowledged themselves to be christians, and having refused to pay due honor to the emperor, I command their heads to be cut off." This having been read, Speratus and the rest said; "We give thanks to God, who honoreth us this day, with being received as martyrs in heaven, for confessing his name." They were carried to the place of punishment, where they fell on their knees all together, and having again given thanks to Jesus Christ, they were beheaded."

At Carthage four young catechumens were also seized, Revocatus and Felicitas, slaves to the same master, with Secondulus, and also Vivia Perpetua, a lady of quality. She had a father, a mother, and two brothers, of whom one was a catechumen; she was married; had a son at her breast, and was about 22 years of age. To these five, Satur voluntarily joined himself by an excess of zeal too common at that time. While they were in the hands of their persecutors, the father of Perpetua, himself a Pagan, but full of affection to his favorite offspring, importuned her to fall from the faith. His entreaties were in vain. Her pious constancy appeared to him an absurd obstinacy, and in his rage he gave her rough treatment. While under guard, before they were confined in prison, these catechumens found means to procure baptism, and Perpetua's prayers were directed particularly for patience under bodily pains. They were then put into a dark dungeon. Perpetua's concern for her infant was extreme. Tertius and Pomponius, two deacons of the church, obtained by money that they might go out of the dark dungeon, and for some hours, refresh themselves in a more commodious place, where Perpetua gave the breast to her infant, and then recommended him carefully to her mother. For some time her mind was devoured with concern for the distress she had brought on her family, though it was for the sake of a good conscience, but in time her spirit was more composed, and her prison became a palace.

Her father, some time after, came to the prison, overwhelmed with grief, which, in all probability, was augmented by the reflections he made on his passionate behavior to her at their last interview. "Have pity, my daughter," says he, "on my grey hairs; have pity on your father, if I were ever worthy of that name; if I myself have brought you up to this age, if I have preferred you to all your brethren, make me not a reproach to mankind, respect your father and your aunt, (these, probably, were joined in the interests of paganism, while the mother appears to have been a christian, otherwise his silence concerning her seems hardly to be accounted for;) have compassion on your son, who cannot survive you; lay aside your obstinacy, lest you destroy us all; for if you perish, we must all shut our mouths in disgrace." With much tenderness he kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, weeping and calling her no longer his daughter, but his mistress. He was the only one in the family who did not rejoice at her martyrdom. Perpetua, though inwardly torn with filial affection, could offer no other comfort than to desire him to acquiesce in the Divine disposal.

The next day, they were all brought before the court, and examined in the presence of vast crowds. There her unhappy father appeared with his little grandson, and taking Perpetua aside, conjured her to have some pity on her child. The procurator, Hilarian, joined in the suit, but in vain. The old man then attempted to draw his daughter from the scaffold. Hilarian ordered him to be beaten, and a blow, which he received with a staff, was felt by Perpetua very severely.

Hilarian ordered them to be exposed to the wild beasts. They then returned cheerfully to their prison. Perpetua sent the deacon, Pomponius, to demand her child of her father, which he refused to return. The health of the child, we are told, suffered not, nor did Perpetua feel any bodily inconvenience.

Secondulus died in prison. Felicitas was eight months gone with child, and seeing the days of the public shews to be near, was afflicted lest her execution should be deferred. Three days before the spectacles, her companions joined in prayer for her.—Presently after, her pains came upon her, and she was delivered of a child, but with much difficulty.—One of the door-keepers, who perhaps expected to have found in her a stoical insensibility, and heard her cries; said, "Do you complain of this? what will you do when you are exposed to the beasts?" Felicitas answered with a sagacity truly christian, "It is *I* that suffer now, but then there will be *another with me, that will suffer for me*, because I shall suffer for *his sake*." Her new born daughter was delivered to a christian woman, who nursed it as her own.

The tribune, believing a report of some, that the prisoners would free themselves by magical practices, treated them roughly. "Why did'nt you," says Perpetua, "give us some relief? Will it not be for your honor that we should appear well fed at the spectacles."

This address had the desired effect, and procured a very agreeable alteration in their treatment. The day before the shews, they gave them their last meal. The martyrs did their utmost to convert this into a *love feast*, they ate it in public; their brethren and others were allowed to visit them, and the keeper of the prison himself, by this time, was converted to the faith; they talked to the people, warned them to flee from the wrath to come, pointed out to them their own happy lot, and smiled at the curiosity of those who ran to see them. "Observe well our faces," cries Satur, with much animation, "that ye may know them at the day of judgment."

The Spirit of God was much with them on the day of trial; joy, rather than fear, was painted on their looks. Perpetua, cherished by Jesus Christ, went on with a composed countenance and an easy pace, holding down her eyes, lest the spectators might draw wrong conclusions from their vivacity. Some idolatrous habits were offered them: "We sacrifice our lives," say they, "to avoid this, and thus we have bargained with you." The tribune desisted from his demand.

Perpetua sang, as already victorious, and Revocatus, Saterninus, and Satur, endeavored to affect the people with the fear of the wrath to come. Being come into Hilarian's presence, "Thou judgest us," say they, "and God shall judge thee." The mob was enraged, and insisted on their being scourged before they were exposed to the wild beasts. It was done, and the martyrs rejoiced in being conformed to their Savior's sufferings. After this they were exposed to the wild beasts, and having, with great fortitude and holy composure of soul, undergone a great variety of sufferings, they all fell asleep in Jesus.

During the course of this dreadful persecution, the enmity of the human heart, against the holy religion of Jesus, raged to an awful degree; and the grace of God, in the sudden and wonderful conversions of several persons who voluntarily suffered death for that doctrine which they before detested, was gloriously displayed.

Lyons was once more dyed with the blood of the martyrs. It was at this time that Irenæus perished and many with him.

Some churches purchased their peace of the magistrates, informers, and soldiers, who were appointed to search them out, by paying them money. The pastors of the churches approved of this proceeding, because it was only enduring the loss of their goods, and preferring that to the endangering of their souls. But God, to moderate the distress of his people, and not to suffer them to be tried by persecution at once very long, in the year two hundred and eleven, called the tyrant Severus to his bar, to give an account for his cruelties and opposition to his kingdom, after he had reigned eighteen years. Under his son and successor Caracalla, though a monster of wickedness, the church found some repose and tranquility. During the seven years and six months, which he reigned, the christians found in him friendship and protection. Indeed, for the space of thirty eight years, from the death of Severus to the reign of Decius, if we except the short, turbulent interval of Maximinus, the calm of the church continued. About the year two hundred and ten, Origen came to Rome, desirous of visiting that ancient church, but soon returned to Alexandria, and to his office of catechizing. Heretics and philosophers attended his lectures, and he took, no doubt, a very excellent method to win their regard to himself at least, by instructing them in civil and secular learning. When philosophers pressed him with their opinions, he confuted them by arguments drawn from other philosophers, and commented on their works with so much acuteness and sagacity, as to acquire among Gentiles a reputation for great learning and wisdom. He encouraged many to study the liberal arts, assuring them, that they would, by that means, be much better furnished for the contemplation of the holy scripture, and was entirely of opinion, that secular and philosophical institutes were very necessary and profitable for himself. But what can Origen mean by asserting the utility and even necessity of philosophy for himself as a christian? Are not the scriptures *able* to make a man wise unto salvation *through faith which is in Christ Jesus, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work?* To him the gospel seems to have triumphed over Gentilism, through the aid of heathen philosophy; but it appears to have been hereby corrupted, and many greatly departed from the simplicity of the gospel. An acquaintance with the classics and philosophers may furnish a person with strong arguments to prove the necessity and excellency of Divine revelation, and this deserves seriously to be encouraged in all who are to instruct others, for their improvement in taste, language, eloquence, and history. But if these are to dictate in religion, or are thought capable, even of adding to the stock of theological knowledge, the scriptures may seem to have been defectively written. Origen was laborious at his attempts to mix things, which the Holy Ghost assures us, will not amalgamate; for among his learned converts, we hear nothing of conviction of sin, of conversion, of the influences of the Holy Spirit, or of the love of Christ. The allegorical and philosophical interpretations of the scriptures by Origen much clouded their true light.

Macrinus succeeded Caracalla.

CHAPTER VI.

Christian affairs during the Reign of Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexandrinus, Maximinus, Pupienus, Gordian, and Philip.

MACRINUS reigned not quite a year. Heliogabalus, whose follies and vices were infamous, succeeded him, and having swayed the sceptre three years and nine months, was slain at the age of 18. The church of God suffered nothing from him. His cousin, Alexander, in the 16th year of his age, succeeded him, and was one of the best moral characters in civil history. He did not persecute the christians, but rather approved and countenanced them.

This emperor had a domestic chapel, where he, every morning, worshipped those princes who had been ranked among the gods, whose characters were most esteemed; among whom he considered Apollonius of Tyana, Jesus Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus.

It seems to have been his plan to encourage every thing that had the appearance of religion and virtue, and to discountenance whatever was openly immoral and profane. He appears to have learnt, in some measure, the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead, and by the help of the Electic philosophy, to have attempted to consolidate all religions in one mass. But things which accompany salvation, will not incorporate with this plan.

At this time Noetus, of Smyrna, propagated in the east, the heresy, that there is no distinction between the Divine Persons in the Godhead. The pastors of the church of Ephesus, to which he belonged, summoned him before them, and asked whether he really maintained this opinion. At first he denied it; but afterwards, having formed a party, he became more bold, and publicly taught this heresy. Being again interrogated by the pastors, he said, "What harm have I done? I glorify none but one God; I know none besides him who hath been begotten, who suffered and died." In this way he evidently confounded the persons of the Father and the Son together; and being obstinate in his views, was ejected from the church, with his disciples.

This proves that there were, at that time, zeal and faithfulness among the primitive christians, to support the fundamental articles of their religion.

Origen was now sent for to Athens to assist the churches, who were there disturbed with several heresies. Thence he went to Palestine. At Cæsarea, Theoctistus, the bishop, and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, ordained him a priest, at the age of 45, about the year 230. Demetrius, his own bishop was offended, and exposed his youthful indiscretion in his having mutilated himself, and on his return to Alexandria, procured his ejection from the church, by a council of pastors, on account of some errors which had appeared in his works. Banished from Egypt, Origen repaired to Palestine to his friends who had ordained him, followed by many disciples. Here the famous Gregory Thaumaturgus attended his theological lectures, which were still delivered in Origen's usual manner.

Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, died, after having held that office 43 years. Heraclas succeeded him.

In the year 235, the emperor Alexander was murdered, together with his mother, and Maximin the murderer obtained the empire. His malice against the house of Alexander disposed him to persecute the christians, and he gave orders to put to death the pastors of churches. Others suffered with them. The flame extended even to Cappadocia. Origen was obliged to retire. The tyrant's reign continued only three years.

Pupienus and Balbinus, the successors of Maximin, were slain in the year 238. Gordian reigned six years, and was succeeded by his murderer, Philip the Arabian.

That Origen's philosophy had not obliterated his christianity, appears from a letter addressed to his scholar Thaumaturgus, in which he exhorts him to apply himself chiefly to the Holy Scripture, to read it very attentively, not to speak or judge of it lightly, but with unshaken faith and prayer, which, says he, is absolutely necessary for understanding it.

Philip began to reign in the year two hundred and forty four. He appears to have professed the christian religion, but not to have been cordial in it; for he conducted the secular games, which were full of idolatry, and hereby manifested that he was unwilling to give up any thing for the sake of Christ. Philip's profession merely shows that the progress of christianity in the world was then very considerable; but its original purity had greatly declined.

Philip reigned five years, and was succeeded by Decius his murderer. A little before his death, in the year two hundred and forty eight, Cyprian was chosen bishop of Carthage.

CHAPTER VII.

The Conversion of Cyprian.

CYPRIAN was a professor of oratory in the city of Carthage, and a man of wealth, quality and dignity. Cæcilius, a Carthagenian presbyter, had the felicity, under God, to conduct him to the knowledge of Christ, and in his gratitude Cyprian afterwards assumed the surname of Cæcilius. His conversion was about the year two hundred and forty six. About thirteen years was the whole period of his christian life. But God can do great things in a little time. He was, by the Holy Spirit, led on with vast rapidity, and in a great measure avoided the errors and delusions of false learning and self-conceit. Faith and love seem, in native simplicity, to have possessed him when an early convert. He saw with pity the poor of the flock, and knew no method so proper, of employing the unrighteous mammon, as to relieve their distress. He sold whole estates for their benefit. There appeared in Cyprian a spirit at once so simple, so zealous, and so intelligent, that in about two years after his conversion, he was chosen presbyter and then bishop of Carthage. His virtue was not feigned. The love of Christ evidently preponderated in him above all secular considerations. His wife opposed his christian spirit of liberality in vain. The widow, the orphan, and the poor, found in him continually a sympathizing benefactor. It was with much reluctance that he observed the designs of the people to choose him for their bishop. He, however, yielded to their importunate solicitations and accepted the painful pre-eminence. In him we see a man of business and of the world, rising at once, a Phœnix in the church, no extraordinary theologian in point of accurate knowledge, yet a useful, practical divine, an accomplished pastor, flaming with the love of God and of souls, and with unremitted activity, spending and being spent for Christ

Jesus. To all this excellence, he was raised by renewing and sanctifying grace, and made a happy instrument of guiding souls to that rest which remains for the people of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Beginnings of the Persecution of Decius, and Cyprian's Government till his Retirement.

"HOW Cyprian conducted himself in his ministry, who is sufficient to relate?" says Pontinus, his deacon, and biographer. Some particular account, however, might have been expected from one who had such ample opportunity of information. One thing he notices of his external appearance. His looks had a due mixture of gravity and cheerfulness, so that it was doubtful whether he was more worthy of love or of reverence. His dress also was correspondent to his looks; he had renounced the secular pomp to which his rank in life entitled him, yet he avoided affected penury. From a man of Cyprian's piety and good sense united, such a conduct might be expected.

While Cyprian was laboring to recover that spirit of godliness among the Africans, which long peace had corrupted, Philip was slain and succeeded by Decius. His enmity to the former emperor conspired with his Pagan prejudices to bring on the most dreadful persecution which the church had yet experienced. It was evident that nothing less than the destruction of the christian name was intended.

The eventful period of Cyprian's ministry extends from the year 248 to 260. Decius became emperor towards the beginning of this period. The persecution raged with astonishing fury both in the east and in the west. The latter is the scene before us at present. And in a treatise of Cyprian concerning the lapsed, we have an affecting account of the declension from the spirit of christianity, which had taken place before his conversion, which moved God to chastise his church. "If the cause of our miseries," says he, "be investigated, the cure of the wound is found.—The Lord would have his family to be tried. And because the long peace had corrupted the discipline divinely revealed to us; the heavenly chastisement hath raised up our faith which had lain almost dormant; and when by our sins we had deserved to suffer still more, the merciful Lord so moderated all things, that the whole scene rather deserves the name of a trial than a persecution. Each was bent on improving his patrimony: forgetting what believers had done under the apostles, and what they ought always to do, they brooded over the arts of amassing wealth. The pastors and deacons equally forgat their duty, works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb. Luxury and effeminacy prevailed. Meretricious arts in dress were cultivated. Fraud and deceit were practised among brethren. Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers, could swear, not only without reverence, but even without veracity; with haughty asperity they despised their ecclesiastical superiors; could rail against one another with outrageous acrimony, and conduct quarrels with settled malice; even many bishops, who ought to be guides and patterns to the rest, neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, gave themselves up to secular pursuits; deserting their places of residence and their flocks, they travelled through distant provinces in quest of gain, gave no assistance to the needy brethren, were insatiable in their thirst of money, possessed estates by fraud, and multiplied usury. What have we not deserved to suffer for such conduct?—Even the Divine Word hath foretold us what we might expect, "*If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges.*" These things have been denounced and foretold, but in vain; our sins have brought our affairs to that pass, that while we despised the Lord's directions we were obliged to undergo the correction of our evils and the trial of our faith by severe remedies."

That a deep declension from christian purity had taken place, not only in the East, where false philosophy aided its progress, but also in the West, where the common influence of prosperity on human depravity appears, is now completely evident, and it deserves to be remarked, that the first grand and general declension, since the first out-pouring of the Divine Spirit, should be fixed about the middle of this century.—For a time like this God raised up Cyprian, by a strong personal work of Divine grace on his own heart, and qualified him for great usefulness to the church under her deep afflictions.

In the early part of this persecution, vast numbers, from among Cyprian's people, with whom avarice had taken such deep root, immediately lapsed into idolatry. Even before men were accused as christians, many ran to the Forum and sacrificed to the gods as they were ordered, and the crowds of them were so large that the magistrates wished to defer a number of them till the next day, but were importuned by the wretched suppliants to allow them, that night, to prove themselves heathens.

At Rome the persecution raged with unremitting violence. There Fabian the bishop suffered, and for some time it became impracticable to elect a successor; and yet it does not appear that the metropolis suffered more in proportion than many other places, since we find that the flame of persecution had driven some bishops from distant provinces who fled for shelter to Rome. Cyprian, however, having been regularly informed by the Roman clergy of the martyrdom of their bishop, congratulated them on his glorious exit, and exulted on occasion of his uprightness and integrity. He expresses the pleasure he experienced that his edifying example had so much penetrated their minds, and owns the energy which he felt to imitate the pattern.

Moyses and Maximus, two Roman presbyters, with other confessors were also seized and imprisoned.—Attempts were repeatedly made to persuade them to relinquish the faith, but in vain. Cyprian found means to write to them also a letter full of benevolence, and breathing the strongest pathos. He tells them his heart was with them continually, that he prayed for them in his public ministry, and in private. He comforts them under the pressures of hunger and thirst which they endured, and congratulates them for living now not for this life, but for the next, and particularly because their example would be a means of confirming many who were in a wavering state.—But Carthage soon became an unsafe residence for Cyprian himself. By repeated suffrages of the people at the theatre he was demanded to be taken and given to the lions; and it behoved him immediately to retire into a place of safety, or to expect the crown of martyrdom.

Cyprian's spirit in interpreting scripture was more simple, and more accommodated to receive its plain and obvious sense, than that of men who had learnt to refine and subtilize. He knew the liberty which his Divine Master had given to his people of fleeing, when they were persecuted in one city, to another, and embraced it. Nay, he seems scarce to have thought it lawful to do otherwise. Even the last state of his martyrdom evinces this. His manner of enduring it, when it was providentially brought on him, sufficiently clears him of all suspicion of pusillanimity. To unite such seemingly opposite qualities as discretion and fortitude, each in a very high degree, is a sure characteristic of greatness in a christian; it is grace in its highest exercise. Pontius thinks it was not without a particular Divine direction that he was moved to act in this manner for the benefit of the church.

Behold him, now safe, under God, from the arm of persecution, through the love of his people, in some place of retreat, for the space of two years, and let us next see how this time was employed.

CHAPTER IX.

The History of Cyprian and the Western Church during his Retirement of two years.

CYPRIAN was never more active than in his retreat. Nothing of moment occurred in ecclesiastical affairs, either in Africa or Italy, with which he was not acquainted; and his counsels, under God, were of the greatest influence in both countries.

The clergy at Rome, having learnt what were the sufferings of the clergy at Carthage, and the retreat of Cyprian, and fearing lest his departure from his people, when they were in such an afflicted condition, might be attended with pernicious consequences, provided the pastors of the churches at Carthage imitated his example in flight, took measures to express to them the deep sense which they had, both of their own situation and that of the clergy of Carthage, whose duty it was to take care not to incur upon themselves the censure of faithless shepherds; but rather to imitate their Lord, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his own life for his flock, and who so earnestly and repeatedly charges Simon Peter, as a proof of his love to his Master, to feed his sheep. "We would not wish, dear brethren," say they, "to find you, mere mercenaries, but good shepherds, since you know it must be highly sinful in you not to exhort the brethren to stand immovable in the faith, lest the brethren be totally subverted by idolatry. Nor do we only in words thus exhort you, but, as you may learn from many who come from us to you, we have done, and still do, with the help of God, all these things, with all solicitude and at the hazard of our lives, having, before our eyes, the fear of God and perpetual punishment rather than the fear of men and a temporary calamity; not deserting the brethren, but exhorting them to stand in the faith, and to be ready to follow their Lord when called; we have also done our utmost to recover those who had gone up to sacrifice to save their lives. Our church stands fast in the faith in general, though some, overcome by terror, either because they were persons in high life, or were moved by the fear of men, have lapsed, yet these, though separated from us, we do not give up as lost altogether, but we exhort them to repent, if they may find mercy with HIM who is able to save; lest, by relinquishing them, we make them still more incurable.

"Thus, brethren, we would wish *you* also to do; as much as in you lies, exhorting the lapsed, should they be seized, a second time to confess their Savior. And we suggest to you to receive again into communion, any of these, if they heartily desire it, and give proofs of sound repentance. And certainly officers should be appointed to minister to the widows, the sick, those in prison and those who are in a state of banishment. A special care should be exercised over the catechumens, to preserve from apostacy; and those, whose duty it is to inter the dead, ought to consider the interment of the martyrs as matter of indespensable obligation.

"Certain we are, that those servants, who shall be found to have been thus faithful, in that which is least, will have authority over ten cities. May God, who does all things for those who hope in him, grant that we may be all found thus diligently employed! The brethren in bonds, the clergy, and the whole church salute you, all of us, with earnest solicitude, watching for all who call on the name of the Lord. And we beseech you, in return, to be mindful of us also in your prayers."

This letter breathes the very spirit of the gospel.—The christian tenderness, charity, meekness, zeal and prudence of Cyprian, toward the brethren of Carthage, in his exile from them, appear from the following letter which he sent to the clergy of that city.

"Being hitherto preserved by the favor of God, I salute you, dearest brethren, rejoicing to hear of your safety. As present circumstances permit not my presence among you, I beg you, by your faith and by the ties of religion, to discharge your office, in conjunction with mine also, that nothing be wanting either on the head of discipline or of diligence. I beg that nothing may be wanting to supply the necessities of those who are imprisoned, because of their glorious confession of God, or who labor under the pressures of indigence and poverty, since the whole ecclesiastical fund is in the hands of the clergy for this very purpose, that a number may have it in their power to relieve the wants of individuals.

I beg further, that you would use evey prudential and cautious method to procure the peace of the church; and if the brethren, through charity, wish to confer with and visit those pious confessors, whom the divine goodness hath thus far shone upon by such good beginnings, that they would however do this cautiously, not in crowds, nor in a multitude; lest any odium should hence arise, and the liberty of admission be denied altogether; and while, through greediness, we aim at too much, we lose all. Consult therefore and provide, that this may be done safely and with discretion; so that the presbyters one by one, accompanied by the deacons in turn, may successively minister to them, because the change of persons visiting them is less liable to breed suspicion. For in all things we ought to be meek and humble, as becomes the servants of God, to redeem the time, to have a regard for peace, and provide for the people. Most dearly beloved and longed-for, I wish you all prosperity, and to remember us. Salute all the brethren; Victor the deacon, and those that are with us, salute you."

During this persecution many of the common people and some of the clergy renounced christianity.—This must have been a sore trial to so affectionate and pious a pastor as was Cyprian.

When Cyprian was in his retirement he wrote many letters to his afflicted brethren at Carthage, in which he warns and exhorts them to stand firm in the faith and religion of Jesus Christ. In these he enjoins subordination of the people to their pastors, and that they should cultivate an humble, modest and peaceable demeanor; that in all their sufferings they should continue mild and humble. He points out to them the use of good discipline in the church of God, the benefits of orderly subjection in the members, the danger of pride and self-exaltation, and the deceitfulness of the human heart. Much did he warn them against contentions and strifes, and exhort and entreat them to live in peace among themselves, and as far as possible with all mankind.

Deeply sensible that his people had, before the persecution, greatly provoked the Lord to wrath, he urges upon them abundantly the duty of repentance.—"If the Lord see us humble and quiet, lovingly united, and corrected by the present tribulation he will deliver us."

The persecution at Carthage was dreadful on account of the great number of apostates; but christian faith, patience and magnanimity, in Cyprian, and a small remnant, were in strong and lively exercise. Discipline was at this time maintained with a good degree of care and diligence in the church at Rome; and the pastors of churches there carefully endeavored to strengthen the hands of the faithful in Carthage, to maintain the life, order and vigor of true piety in that church.

It was a maxim of great importance, with all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, to consider that there was but one church of Christ in the world; and that this was diffused through various provinces, and that all ought to watch and strive to keep it as free from heresies as possible, and in a state of life and gospel vigor. It was this unity and uniformity of the christian church which hitherto had preserved it, under God, from the baneful infection of heresies.

The Roman clergy appear, at this time, to have been in general, men of real piety. Speaking of the importance of not being hasty to re-admit the lapsed into the church, without having first obtained ample satisfaction of their deep and genuine contrition, they express themselves in the following language; "Let them knock at the doors, but not break them. Let them go to the threshold of the church, but not leap over it. Let them watch at the gates of the heavenly camp, but with that modesty which becomes those who remember they have been deserters. Let them arm themselves indeed with the weapons of humility, and resume that shield of faith which they dropped, through the fear of death; but so that they may be armed against the devil, not against the church which grieves at their fall."

While Cyprian was absent from his church at Carthage, he was active in his retirement to revive a spirit of true gospel discipline among the people of his pastoral charge; but Felicissimus, who had long been a secret enemy of the bishop, and a person of a very exceptionable character, by many artifices and blandishments, drew away a party, and encouraged many not to observe ecclesiastical discipline faithfully and modestly. This ambitious demagogue used his utmost artifice to bring over to his views all the lapsed, to make his party sufficiently strong to prevent an excommunication of himself from the church for the crime of adultery, of which he was guilty. Under this state of affairs, Cyprian writes to the lapsed and all leaning to a schismatic spirit, "There is one God, one Christ, one church. Depart, I pray you, far from these men, and avoid their discourse as a plague and pestilence. They hinder your prayers and tears by affording you false consolations. Acquiesce, I beseech you, in our counsel, who pray daily for you, and desire you to be restored to the church by the grace of the Lord. Join your prayers and tears with ours. But, if any, careless of repentance, shall betake himself to Felicissimus and his party, let him know that his after-return to the church will be impracticable."

Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, was the principal actor in these disagreeable scenes. He was extremely scandalous and immoral. His domestic crimes had been so notorious as to render him not only no longer fit to be a minister, but even unworthy to be received into lay communion. The examination of his conduct was just going to take place, when the persecution by Decius prevented it. The views of Felicissimus and his party, he cherished and supported, and did much mischief in the church. This dreadful persecution did not unite christian professors in love. Novatus, either unwilling to face the bishop of Carthage, or desirous to extend the mischiefs of schism, passed the sea and came to Rome. There he had the address to separate a priest named Novatian from the Roman church, and to bring him to associate with himself. These jointly insisted that it is wrong to receive those into the church who once had lapsed, though they give the fullest evidence of sincere repentance.

At this time, sixteen bishops happening to be at Rome, ordained Cornelius, bishop of Rome, as the successor of Fabian. He was very unwilling to accept the office; but the election of a bishop to withstand the growing schism appeared necessary, and the people who were present approved of his ordination.

Novatian procured himself to be ordained bishop in opposition, in a very irregular manner, and vented calumnies against Cornelius, whose life appears to have been worthy of the gospel. The Novatians separated from the general church, not on grounds of doctrine, but of discipline. Their leader appears to have been sound in the doctrine of the Trinity. Novatus, conscious of scandalous crimes, fled from Rome and became bishop of the Novatians in Africa. We are not to believe that all his followers were men void of the faith and love of Jesus: but to refuse the re-admission of true penitents was an instance of Pharisaical pride. In justice to Novatian, it ought to be mentioned that he advised to exhort the lapsed to repentance, and then to leave them to the judgment of God.

This denomination condemned second marriages, and denied communion forever to such as, after baptism, married a second time.

At length Cyprian ventured out of his retreat and returned to Carthage. In what manner he conducted himself shall be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

Cyprian's settlement of his Church after his return, and the History of the Western Church till the persecution under Gallus.

ON the return of Cyprian to Carthage, he had much to do. Decius had left Rome to repel the incursion of the Goths, and the church in this distraction of public affairs had a respite from persecution, but malice against christianity had not ceased.

A council was held at Carthage by Cyprian and the other bishops of Africa. The ordination of Cornelius was recognized as legitimate: while that of Novatian was declared to be schismatical. Felicissimus was condemned. The case of the lapsed was determined. True penitents were to be restored; doubtful characters to be deferred, and yet every method of christian charity to be used to facilitate their return and restoration. The Novatians remained a long time after, a distinct body of professing christians. Though their secession could not be justified, the spirit of God appears to have been with some of them, during their separation from the church. God is not confined to any particular modes of ecclesiastical government.

Decius lost his life in battle, in the year two hundred and fifty one, after having reigned thirty months; his successor was Gallus, who, for a little time, allowed peace to the church.

Cyprian watched for the good of souls as one who must give an account to God of his ministry, and strove hard to have all the churches perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Union, among the professed friends of Christ at Rome, was as much on his heart, as union at Carthage, because he considered Christ's body as one.

The appearance of a new persecution from Gallus now threatening the church, Cyprian, with the African

Synod, wrote to Curnelius about hastening the time of receiving penitents, that they might be armed for the approaching storm.

CHAPTER XI.

The Effects of the Persecution of Decius in the Eastern Church.

THOUGH the Eastern and Western churches were divided by the Greek and Roman language, yet were they cemented by the common bond of the Roman government, and much more so by the common bond of salvation.

In this persecution, Alexander, bishop of the church at Jerusalem, was cast into prison, and finally breathed out his soul under confinement. The renowned Origen too also suffered extremely.—Bonds, torments, a dungeon, the pressure of an iron chair, the distension of his feet for many days, threats of burning, and other evils, were inflicted by his enemies, which he manfully endured. All these things ended, at last, in the preservation of his life, the judge solicitously taking care that his tortures should not kill him. This great man at last died in his seventieth year, about the same time as did the emperor Decius.

At this time Dionysius was bishop of Alexandria, a person of great and deserved renown in the church; for a few of his writings, we are obliged to Eusebius. In an Epistle to Germanus, Dionysius thus speaks:—"Sabinus, the Roman governor, sent an officer to seek me during the persecution of Decius, and I remained four days at home, expecting his coming; he made the most accurate search in the roads, the rivers, and the fields, where he suspected I might be hid. A confusion seems to have seized him, that he should not find my house; for he had no idea that a man in my circumstances should stay at home. At length after four days, God ordered me to remove, and having opened me a way, contrary to all expectation, I and my servants and many of the brethren went together. The event shewed the whole was the work of Divine Providence. About sun-set, being seized, together with my company, by the soldiers, I was led to Taposiris. But my friend, Timotheus, by the providence of God, was not present, nor was he seized. But coming afterwards, he found my house forsaken, and ministers guarding it, and that we were taken captive.—How wonderful was the dispensation! but it shall be related with truth. A countrymen met Timotheus, flying in confusion, and asked the cause of his hurry; he told him the truth; the peasant hearing it, went away to a nuptial feast; for in them the custom was to watch all night. He informed the guests of what he had heard. At once they all rose up, as by a signal, and ran quickly to us, and shouted; our soldiers, struck with a panic, fled, and the invaders found us as we were, on naked beds. I first thought they must have been a company of robbers, and remaining on my bed in my linen, reached to them the rest of my apparel, which was just by. They ordered me to rise and go out quickly. At length understanding their real design, I cried out entreating them earnestly to depart, and let us alone. But if they really meant any kindness to us, I begged them to prevent my persecutors and take off my head. They compelled me to rise by plain violence, and I threw myself on the ground. They seized my hands and feet, pulled me out, by force; I was set on an ass, and conducted from the place." In so remarkable a manner was his useful life preserved to the church. We shall see it was not in vain.

At Alexandria, in Egypt, a most bloody persecution raged for a year before that of Decian commenced. There the Pagan Gentiles put the christians to the greatest distress, and multitudes to the most painful and cruel deaths. Their design was to bring as many as they possibly could to renounce Christ, by sacrificing to the heathen gods. But they stood firm, and God supported them under their sore conflicts.—

Those who suffered for Christ, had embraced him as their Redeemer, and they manifested that they loved him better than they did even their own lives; and he as their Savior granted them special tokens of his love, by peculiar supports in their expiring moments.

In the Decian persecution, the instruments of torture, were swords, wild beasts, red-hot chains, wheels to stretch the bodies, and talons to tear them. The genius of men was never known to have had more employment in aiding the savageness of the heart.—Life was prolonged in torture, that impatience in suffering might, at length, effect what surprize and terror could not.

See two examples of Satanic artifice. A martyr having endured the rack and burning plates, the judge ordered him to be rubbed all over with honey, and then exposed him in the sun, which was very hot, lying on his back with his hands tied behind him, that he might be stung by the flies. Another person, young and in the flower of his age, was, by the order of the same judge, carried into a pleasant garden among flowers, near a pleasing rivulet surrouded with trees; here they laid him on a feather bed, bound him with silken cords, and left him alone. Then they brought thither a lewd woman, very handsome, who began to embrace him and to court him with all possible impudence. The martyr bit off his tongue, not knowing how to resist the assaults of sensuality any longer, and spit it in her face. Shocking as these things were, christianity appeared what it really is, true holiness; while its persecutors shewed that they were at enmity with all godliness.

Alexander, bishop of Comana, suffered martyrdom by fire. At Smyrna, Eudemon, the bishop, apostatized, and several unhappily followed his example.—But all did not. Pionius, one of the presbyters, stood firm. In expectation of being seized, he put a chain upon his neck, and caused Sabina and Asclepiades to do the same, to show their readiness to suffer. Polemon, keeper of the idol-temple, came to them with the magistrates: "Don't you know," says he, "that the emperor has ordered you to sacrifice?" "We are not ignorant of the commandments," says Pionius, "but they are those which command us to worship God." "Come to the market-place," says Polemon, "and see the truth of what I have said." "We obey the true God," said Sabina and Asclepiades.

When the martyrs were in the midst of the multitude in the market-place, "you had better," says Polemon, "submit to avoid the torture." Pionius began to speak: "Citizens of Smyrna, who please yourselves with the beauty of your walls and city, and value yourselves on account of your poet, Homer, and ye Jews, if there be any among you, hear me speak a few words: We find that Smyrna has been esteemed the finest city in the world, and was reckoned the chief of those which contended for the honor of Homer's birth. I am informed that you deride those who come of their own accord to sacrifice, or who do not refuse when urged to it. But surely your teacher Homer should be attended to, who says, that we ought not to rejoice at the death of any man. And ye Jews ought to obey Moses, who tells you, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from him; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again." And Solomon says, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth. For my part I had rather die, and undergo any sufferings, than contradict my principles. Whence then proceed the laughter and scoffs of the Jews, pointed not only against those who have sacrificed, but against us. They insult us with a malicious pleasure to see our long peace interrupted.—Though we were their enemies, still we are men. But what harm have we done them? What have we made them suffer? Whom have we spoken against? Whom have we persecuted? Whom have we compelled to worship idols? Do they think themselves less culpable than those who suffer death from persecution?" He then addressed the Jews on the grounds of their own scriptures, and solemnly placed before the Pagans the day of judgment.

He spake long, was very attentively heard, and there is reason to hope it was not in vain. The people, who surrounded him, said with Polemon, "Believe us, Pionius, your probity and wisdom make us deem you worthy to live, and life is pleasant." Thus did conscience and humanity operate in their hearts. "I own," says the martyr, "life is pleasant, but I mean that which I aspire after. We will not, through a contemptuous spirit, forsake these gifts; but that which we prefer to them is infinitely better. I thank you for your expressions of kindness. I cannot, however, but suspect some stratagem in it." The people continued entreating him, and he still discoursed to them of an hereafter. The well known sincerity and unquestionable virtues of the man, seem to have filled the Smyrneans with veneration, and his enemies began to fear an uproar in his favor. "It is impossible to persuade you then," said Polemon. "I would to God *I* could persuade you to be a christian," says Pionius.

Sabina had changed her name by the advice of Pionius, who was her brother, for fear of falling into the hands of her Pagan mistress, who, to compel her to renounce christianity, had formerly put her in irons, and banished her to the mountains, where the brethren secretly nourished her. After this she called herself Theodota. "What god dost thou adore?" says Polemon. "God Almighty," she answers, "who made all things, of which we are assured by his Word Jesus Christ."—"And what dost thou adore?" speaking to Asclepiades. "Jesus Christ," says he. "What! is there another God?" says Polemon. "No," says he, "this is the same whom we come here to confess." He who worships the Trinity in Unity will find no difficulty in reconciling these two confessions. Let him who does not so worship, attempt it. One person pitying Pionius, said, "Why do you that are so learned so resolutely seek death?"

Being put into prison, they found there a presbyter named Lemnus, and a woman named Macedonia, and another called Eutychiana, a montanist.

The prisoners were placed all together, and employed themselves in praising God, and shewed every mark of patience and cheerfulness. Many Pagans visited Pionius, and attempted to persuade him; his answers struck them with admiration. Some, who by compulsion had sacrificed, visited them and intreated them with tears. "I now suffer afresh," says Pionius; "methinks I am torn in pieces when I see the pearls of the church trod under foot by swine, and the stars of heaven cast to the earth by the tail of the dragon. But our sins have been the cause."

The Jews, whose character for bigotry had not been lessened by all their miseries, and whose hatred to Christ continued from age to age, with astonishing uniformity, invited some of the lapsed christians to their synagogue. The generous spirit of Pionius was moved to express itself vehemently against the Jews. Among other things he said, "They pretend that Jesus Christ died like other men by constraint. Was that man a common felon, whose disciples have cast out devils for so many years? Could that man be forced to die, for whose sake his disciples, and so many others, have voluntarily suffered the severest punishment?" Having spoken a long time to them, he desired that they would depart out of the prison.

The continuance of miraculous dispensations in favor of christianity in the third century, is here attested. Pionius affirms, that devils were ejected by christians in the name of Christ, in the face of the apostates, who would have been glad of the shadow of an argument to justify their perfidy.

The captain of the horse coming to the prison, ordered Pionius to come to the idol-temple. "Your bishop Eudemon hath already sacrificed," says he. The martyr, knowing that nothing of this sort could be done legally till the arrival of the pro-consul, refused. The captain put a cord about his neck, and dragged him along with Sabina and others. They cried, "we are christians," and fell to the ground, lest they should enter the idol-temple. Pionius, after much resistance, was forced in and laid on the ground before the altar; there stood the unhappy Eudemon, after having sacrificed.

Lepidus, a judge, asks, "What god do you adore?" "Him," says Pionius, "that made heaven and earth." "You mean him that was crucified?" "I mean him whom God the Father sent for the salvation of men." "We must," said the judges one to another, "compel them to say what we desire." "Blush," answered Pionius, "ye adorers of false gods; have some respect for justice, and obey the laws; they enjoin you not to do violence to us, but to put us to death."

One Ruffinus said, "Forbear, Pionius, your thirst after vain glory." "Is this your eloquence?" answered the martyr. "Is this what you have read in your books? Was not Socrates thus treated by the Athenians? According to your advice he sought after vain glory, because he applied himself to wisdom and virtue." A case thus apposite, and which doubtless bore some resemblance, as the philosopher's zeal for moral virtue exposed him to persecution, struck Ruffinus dumb.

A certain person placed a crown on Pionus' head, which he tore, and the pieces lay before the altar. The Pagans, finding their persuasions vain, remanded them to prison.

Afew days after, the pro-consul, Quintilian, returned to Smyrna and examined Pionius. He tried both tortures and persuasions in vain, and at length, enraged at his obstinacy, sentenced him to be burnt alive. Pionius went cheerfully to the place of execution, and thanked God who had preserved his body pure from idolatry. Then he stretched himself out upon the wood, and delivered himself to a soldier to be nailed to the pile. After he was fastened, the executioner said to him, "Change your mind, and the nails shall be taken away." "I have felt them," answered he. After remaining thoughtful for a time, he said, "I hasten, O Lord, that I may the sooner be raised up again." They then lifted him up, fastened to the wood, and afterwards one Metrodorus, a Marcionite, was placed in the same manner. They were turned toward the east, Pionius on the right hand and Metrodorus on the left. They heaped round them a great quantity of wood. Pionius remained some time motionless, with his eyes shut, absorbed in prayer, while the fire was consuming him. Then at length he opened his eyes, and looking cheerfully on the fire, said, "Amen," and expired, saying, "Lord, receive my soul." Of the particular manner in which his companions suffered death, we have no account.

In this narrative of the suffering of Pionius and his companions, we see the spirit of divine charity triumphing over all worldly and selfish considerations. The zeal of Pionius deserves to be commemorated while the world endures. What true religion is, in its simplicity, is exemplified in him abundantly, and to the very last.

In Asia, one Maximus a merchant, was brought before Optimus, the pro-consul, who enquired after his condition. "I was," says he, "born free, but I am the servant of Jesus Christ." "Of what profession are you?" "A man of the world, who live by my dealings." "Are you a christian?" "Though a sinner, yet I am a christian." The usual process was carried on of persuasions and tortures. These are not torments which we suffer for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are wholesome unctions." Such was the effect of the Holy Ghost shedding the love of God in Christ abroad in the human heart! He was ordered to be stoned to death.

All this time the persecution raged in Egypt with unremitting fury. In the lower Thebais there was a young man named Paul, to whom at fifteen years of age, his parents left a great estate. He was a person of much learning, of a mild temper, and full of the love of God. He had a married sister with whom he lived. Her husband was base enough to design an information against him, to obtain his estate. Paul, having notice of this, retired to the desert mountains, where he waited till the persecution ceased. Habit, at length, made solitude agreeable to him. He found a pleasant retreat and lived there ninety years. At the time of his retirement he was twenty-three, and lived to be one hundred and thirteen years old. This is the first distinct account of an hermit in the christian church. None should doubt the genuine piety of Paul, but he carried his love for solitude too far. With the return of peace, the return of social duties should have taken place.

By the Decian persecution the Lord meant to chasten and to purify his church, not to destroy it. This was not a local, but universal persecution, and must have transmitted great numbers to the regions where sin and pain shall be no more. The peace of thirty years had corrupted the whole christian atmosphere. The lightning of the Decian rage refined and cleared it. No doubt the effects were salutary. Without such a scourge, external religion might have spread, and internal have languished. The survivors had an opportunity to learn what the gospel is, in the faithfulness of the martrys ; and men were taught again, that he alone who strengthens christians to suffer, can make true christians. Yet the storm proved fatal to a number of individuals who apostatized, and christianity was cleared of many false friends. The formation of schisms and of superstitious solitudes, had their date from the Decian persecution.

CHAPTER VIII.

The History of the Church during the reign of Gallus.

GALLUS soon began to disturb the peace of the church, though not with the incessant fury of his predecessor. One Hyppolitus, a Roman presbyter, had been seduced into Novatianism ; but his mind had not been perverted from the faith and love of Jesus. He was now called on to suffer martyrdom, which he did with courage and fidelity. Being asked in the last scene of his sufferings, whether he still persisted in the communion of the Novatians? He declared in the most explicit terms, that he now saw the affair in a new light, repented of his having encouraged the schism, and died in the communion of the general church.

In this persecution the Roman christians suffered severely, and behaved themselves with exemplary fortitude. Like good soldiers they stood resolute, armed for the battle by watchings, fastings and prayers. Their bishop, Cornelius, was banished, by the emperor, to Civita Vecchia, where he died in exile. The faithfulness of his sufferings for Christ, clearly evinces the sincerity of his profession.

The daily reception of the Lord's supper appears to have been the practice of the African church at that time.

Lucius was chosen bishop of Rome instead of Cornelius, but was immediately driven into exile by the authority of Gallus. Cyprian congratulated him both on his promotion and sufferings. His banishment must have been of short duration. In the year 252, he was permitted to return to Rome. Soon after which he suffered death and was succeeded by Stephen.

During the reign of Gallus, a dreadful pestilence raged in Africa. The mortality was great. The pagans, alarmed beyond measure, neglected the burial of the dead through fear, and violated the duties of humanity. Many dead bodies lay in the streets of Carthage. Cyprian assembled his people and expatiated on the subject of mercy. He pointed out to them, that if they did no more than others, the heathen and the publican, in shewing mercy to their own, there would be nothing worthy of their profession in that; that christians ought to overcome evil with good, and like their heavenly Father to love their enemies, since he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. Why does not he, who professes himself a son of God, imitate the example of his Father? We ought to answer to our birth, and those who appear to be born of God, should not degenerate, but should be solicitous to prove the genuineness of their relation to God by the imitation of his goodness.

The eloquent voice of Cyprian was attended to by the people with their usual alacrity. The christians ranked themselves into classes to relieve the public calamity. The rich contributed largely, the poor did what they could. Their labor was attended with extreme hazard to their lives. The Pagans saw, with admiration, what the love of God in Christ can do, and beheld their own selfishness and inferiority.

About this time, some Numidian christians were carried into captivity, by an irruption of barbarians, who neither owned the Roman sway, nor had the least acquaintance with christianity. The active benevolence of Cyprian would not suffer him to be at rest.—He took measures to redeem them from captivity, wrote to them a most feeling, affectionate and sympathetic letter, and informed them; "We have sent a hundred thousand sesterces,* the collection of our clergy and laity, of the charge of Carthage, which you will dispense according to your diligence. Heartily do we wish that no such thing may happen again, and that the Lord may protect our brethren from such calamities. But if, to try our faith and love, such afflictions should again befal you, hesitate not to certify us, assuring yourselves of the hearty concurrence of our church with you in prayer and in cheerful contribution."

Soon after the appointment of Stephen to the office of bishop of the church of Rome, Gallus was slain, after a wretched reign of 18 months, in the year 253.

CHAPTER XIII.

The pacific Part of Valerian's Reign.

IN Valerian, the successor of Gallus, the people of God found a friend and protector, for upwards of three years. His house was full of christians and he had a strong predilection in their favor.

During this peace, a council was held in Africa by sixty-six bishops, with Cyprian at their head, to set-the various matters relating to the church of Christ.

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* About $ 3900.

We have an account of two points mentioned, which particularly called their attention.

One Victor, a presbyter, had been received into the church without having undergone the legitimate time of trial, and without the concurrence and consent of the people. His bishop, Therapius, had done it arbitrarily and contrary to the institutes of the former council for settling such matters. Cyprian, in the name of the council, contents himself with reprimandding Therapius; but yet confirms what he had done, and warns him to take care of offending in future.

We here see, that a strict and godly discipline, on the whole, now prevailed in the church, and that the wisest and most successful methods of recovering the lapsed, were used. The authority of bishops was firm, but not despotic; and the share of the people, in matters of discipline, appears worthy of notice.

What the other point was which called the attention of this council, we learn from what Cyprian writes to Fidus; "As to the case of infants, of whom you said that they ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far repeated, that they should not be baptized till the eighth day, we were all of a different opinion. The mercy and grace of God, we all judged, should be denied to none. For if the Lord says in his gospel, *the son of man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*, how ought we to do our utmost, as far as in us lies, that no soul be lost. Spiritual circumcision, should not be impeded by that which is carnal. If even to the foulest offenders, when they afterwards believe, remission of sins be granted, and none is prohibited from baptism and grace; how much more should an infant be admitted, who, just born, hath not sinned at all, except that being carnally born according to Adam, he hath contracted the contagion of ancient death in his first birth; who approaches to remission of sins more easily, because not his own actual guilt, but that of another, is remitted."

Here, in an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who had stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who had testified their love to the Lord Jesus Christ; who appear not to have been wanting in any of the essential characteristics of godliness; a question is brought, not, whether infants should be baptized at all, none contradicted this, but, whether it is right to baptize them immediately, or on the eighth day. To a man, they all determined to baptize them immediately. This transaction passed in the year 253.

In what light the primitive christians viewed theatrical entertainments, and stage players, may be seen by a letter from Cyprian to Eucratius his brother. As this shews the opinions and manners of the brethren of that age, the reader may be entertained and instructed by a perusal.

" *Cyprian to Eucratius his Brother.* Health. Your love and esteem have induced you, dearest brother, to consult me as to what I think of the case of the player among you; who still continues in the same infamous art, and as a teacher of boys, not to be instructed but to be ruined by him, instructs others in that which he himself hath miserably learnt. You ask whether he should be allowed the continuance of christian communion? I think it very inconsistent with the majesty of God, and the rules of his gospel, that the modesty and honor of the church should be defiled by so base and infamous a contagion. In the law, men are prohibited to wear female attire, and are pronounced accursed; how much more criminal must it be, not only to put on woman's garments, but also to express lacivious, obscene, and effeminate gestures in a way of instructing others! And let no man excuse himself as having left the theatre, while yet he undertakes to qualify others for the work. You cannot say that he had ceased from a business, who provides substitutes in his room, and instead of one only, furnishes the play-house with a number; teaching them, contrary to the Divine ordinance, how the male may be reduced into a female, and the sex be changed by art; and how Satan may be gratified by the defilement of the Divine workmanship. If the man makes poverty his excuse, his necessities may be relieved in the same manner as those of others, who are maintained by the alms of the church, provided he be content with frugal, but innocent food, and do not fancy that we are to hire him by a salary to cease from sin, since it is not our interest, but his own, that is concerned in this affair. But let his gains from the service of the play-house be ever so large, what sort of gain is that, which tears men from a participation in the banquet of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and leads them, miserably and ruinously, fattened in this world, to the punishments of eternal famine and thirst? Therefore, as much as you can, recover him from this depravity and infamy, to the way of innocence and to the hope of life, that he may be content with a parsimonious, but salutary maintenance from the church. But if your church be insufficient to maintain its poor, he may transfer himself to us, and here receive what is necessary for food and raiment, and no longer teach pernicious things out of the church, but learn himself salutary things in the church. Dearest son, I wish you constant prosperity."

What, surely, would Cyprian have said, to see large assemblies of christians, so called, devoted to the impurities of the theatre, zealously supporting them, and deriving from them their highest delight? He would, at the same time, observe the same persons, as might be expected, perfect strangers to the joys of the Holy Ghost.

Among the primitive christians, the clergy were looked upon as men wholly devoted to Divine things, and secular cares were taken out of their hands as much as possible: an instance of this we see in the decision of an African Synod, where Cyprian and his colleagues wrote to the church of Ternæ a protest against the appointment of Faustinus, a presbyter, a guardian, by the will of one Germinius Victor. This shows the happy effects produced upon the minds of the church by the spirit of God.

During this century the gospel had spread in France and Spain to a great degree. In Spain, two bishops, Basilides and Martial, were deposed for their unfaithfulness during the persecution.

A question arose, whether persons returning from heresies into the church ought to be re-baptized.—The active spirit of Cyprian was employed, partly by a council in Africa, and partly by his letters, in maintaining, that the baptism of heretics was null and void; that even Novatian baptism ought to be looked upon in the same light. But Stephen, of Rome, maintained, that if they were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it was sufficient to receive them into the church by imposition of hands; and though nothing was at present decided, because no party had power to compel others, yet most christians have long since agreed with Stephen.

But the church, while in worldly ease and quiet, is too easily entangled in curious speculations, and loses the vigor of religious affection: but God, in infinite mercy, has a scourge for his froward children; persecution lowers again with re-collected strength, and christians are called on to forget their idle internal contentions, to humble themselves before him, and prepare for scenes of horror and desolation.

CHAPTER XIV.

The last Acts and Martyrdom of Cyprian.

THE change in the disposition of Valerian toward the christians, which now took place, is one of the most memorable instances of the instability of human characters. More than all his predecessors he was at first disposed to kindness toward them. His palace was full of the friends of Jesus, and was looked on as a sanctuary. But, after he had reigned three years, he was induced by his favorite Macrianus, to treat them with the most vindictive cruelty. This man dealt largely in magical enchantments and abominable sacrifices; he slaughtered children, and scattered the entrails of new born babes. The persecution of christians was an exploit worthy of a mind so facinated with diabolical wickedness and folly. In Valerian he found but too ready a disciple. It began in the year two hundred and fifty seven, and continued the remainder of his reign, three years and a half. Stephen, of Rome, appears to have died a natural death about the beginning of it. Sixtus was his successor.

Cyprian, who had escaped two persecutions, was now made the victim of the third, though his sufferings were attended with circumstances of comparative lenity.

He was seized by the servants of Paternus, the proconsul of Carthage, and brought into his council chamber. "The sacred emperors, Valerian and Gallienus," says Paternus, "have done me the honor to direct letters to me, in which they have decreed, that all men ought to adore the gods whom the Romans adore, and on pain of being slain with the sword. I have heard that you despise the worship of the gods, whence I advise you to consult for yourself and honor them." "I am a christian," Cyprian replied, "and know no God but the one true God, who created heaven and earth, the sea, and all things in them. This God, we christians serve; to him we pray night and day for all men, and even for the emperors." "You shall die the death of a malefactor, if you persevere in this inclination." Cyprian answered, "That is a good inclination which fears God, and therefore must not be changed." "You must then, by the will of the princes, be banished." "He is no exile," it was replied, "who has God in his heart, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Paternus said, "Before you go, tell me where are your presbyters, who are said to be in this city." With much presence of mind, Cyprian reminded him of the edicts made by the best Roman princes against the practice of informers. "They ought not therefore to be discovered by me, but you may find them, and you yourselves do not approve of men offering themselves voluntarily to you." "I will make you discover them by tortures." "By me," the intrepid Cyprian rejoined, "they shall not be discovered." "Our princes have ordered that christians hold no conventicles, and whoever breaks this rule shall be put to death." "Do what you are ordered," Cyprian calmly replied.

Paternus was, however, not disposed to hurt Cyprian. He respected his character. Having, in vain, attempted to work on his fears, he banished him to Curubis, a little town 50 miles from Carthage, situate by the sea, over against Sicily. The place was healthy, the air good, and by his own desire he had private lodgings. During the eleven months he resided there, the citizens of Curubis treated him with great kindness, and he was repeatedly visited by christians. There he served his Divine Master in good works, and in the interim Paternus died.

While he was there, nine bishops, all of whom had been present at the last council at Carthage, were seized, and a great number of the faithful, priests, deacons, virgins and children; who, after having been beaten with sticks, were sent to work in the copper-mines in the mountains.

To them Cyprian addressed a most affectionate letter, peculiarly calculated to support them under their sore trials; an extract from this letter is in the following language: "Let malice and cruelty fetter you as they please, quickly you will come from earth and its sorrows to the kingdom of heaven. In those mines the body is not refreshed by a bed, but Christ is its consolation and rest; your limbs, fatigued with labors, lie on the ground; but to lie down with Christ is no punishment. Filth and dirt defile your limbs, void of the cleansing bath; but you are inwardly washed from all uncleanliness. Your allowance of bread is scanty; but man doth not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. You have no proper clothes to fence you from the cold; but he who has put on Christ is clothed abundantly."

In the year 260, Cyprian, returning by permission from exile, lived in a garden near Carthage, which was now providentially restored to him, though he had sold it at his first conversion. His liberal spirit would have inclined him once more to sell it for the relief of the needy, had he not feared to attract the envy of the persecutors. Here he regulated the affairs of the church, and distributed to the poor what he had left. Here he understood that the persecution, after a little interval, had broken out afresh, and hearing various reports, he sent to Rome to gain certain information. He soon learnt, what he immediately communicated to the brethren, that Valerian had given orders, that bishops, presbyters and deacons should be put to death without delay; that senators, noblemen, and knights should be degraded and deprived of their property, and if they still persisted to be christians, should lose their lives; that women of quality should be deprived of their property and be banished; that all Cæsar's freedmen, who should have confessed, should be stripped of their goods, be chained and sent to work on his estates. These were Valerian's orders to the senate, and were sent to the governors of provinces. "These letters," writes Cyprian, "we daily expect to arrive, standing in the firmness of faith, in patient expectation of suffering, and hoping, from the Lord's help and kindness, the crown of eternal life." He mentions also the news he had heard of the martyrdom of Sixtus, the bishop of Rome, and the ferocity, with which the persecution was there daily carried on in all its horrors. He begs that the intelligence may be circulated through Africa, "That we may all think of death, not more than immortality, and in the fulness of faith, may rather rejoice at, than fear, the event." Galerius Maximus had succeeded Paternus in the proconsulate, and Cyprian was daily expected to be sent for. In this awful crisis, a number of senators and others, considerable for their office or their quality, came to him. Ancient friendship melted the minds of some of them toward the man, and they offered to conceal him in country places, but his soul was now athirst for martyrdom. He was conscientiously afraid of sinning against God by throwing away his life, by courting martyrdom; but he was not afraid of being found in the discharge of duty. Still he continued at Carthage exhorting the faithful, desiring, that if called to suffer, death might find him thus employed for God.

However, being informed that the pro-consul, then at Utica, had sent some soldiers to bring him thither, he was induced to comply, for a season, with the advice of his friends, to retire to some place of concealment, that he might not suffer there; but if his execution was inevitable, he might finish his life among his own people at Carthage; so he states the matter in the last of his letters to the clergy and people. "Here," says he, "in this concealment, I wait for the return of the pro-consul to Carthage, ready to appear before him, and to say what shall be given me at that hour. Do you, dear brethren, do you, agreeably to the discipline you have always received, and to the instructions you have learnt of me, continue still and quiet; let none of you excite any tumult on account of the brethren, or offer himself voluntarily to the Gentiles. He who is seized and delivered up ought to speak; the Lord in us will speak at that hour; and confession, rather than profession, is our duty.

The pro-consul being returned to Carthage, and Cyprian to his garden, officers with soldiers came there to seize him. They carried him in a chariot between them to a place called Sextus, six miles from Carthage, by the sea side, where the pro-consul lodged in a state of ill health. His trial was deferred till the next day, when vast crowds, both of christians and infidels, who revered the virtue of the man, assembled. The chief of the officers guarded him, but in a courteous manner; so that he ate with his friends, and had them about him as usual. The christians passed the night in the street before his lodgings, and the charity of Cyprian moved him to direct a particular attention to be paid to the young women who were among the crowd. The next day the pro-consul sent for Cyprian, who went to the Prætorium, attended by crowds of people. The pro-consul not yet appearing, Cyprian was ordered to wait for him in a private place, where he sat down. Being in a great perspiration, a soldier, who had professed christianity, offered him fresh clothes. "Shall we," says Cyprian, "seek for a remedy for that which may last no longer than a day."

He was at length brought into the judgment-hall, where the pro-consul sat. "Are you Thascius Cyprian?" "I am." "Are you he whom the christians call their bishop?" "I am." "Our princes have ordered you to worship their gods." "That I shall not do." "You will do better to consult your safety, and not despise the gods." "My safety and virtue is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve forever." "I pity your case," says the pro-consul, "and could wish to consult for you." "I do not wish," replies Cyprian, "that things should be otherwise with me, than that, adoring my God, I may hasten to him with all the ardor of my soul; for the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The pro-consul, now reddening with anger, says, "You have lived sacrilegiously a long time, and have formed into a society men of an impious conspiracy, and have shewn yourself an enemy to the gods and their religion, and have not hearkened unto the equitable counsels of our princes, but have ever been a father of the impious sect, and their ringleader; you shall therefore be an example to the rest, and they shall learn their duty by your blood. Let Thascius Cyprian, who refuses to sacrifice to the gods, be put to death by the sword." "God be praised," said the martyr, and while they were leading him away, a multitude of people followed and cried, "Let us die with our holy bishop."

A troop of soldiers attended, and the officers marched on each side of him. They led him into a plain surrounded with trees, and many climbed up to the top of them to see him at a distance. Cyprian took off his mantle, and fell on his knees and worshiped his God; then he put off his inner garment and remained in his shirt. The executioner being come, Cyprian ordered 25 golden denarii to be given him; he himself bound the napkin over his eyes, and a presbyter and deacon tied his hands for him, and the christians laid before him napkins and hankerchiefs to receive his blood. Then his head was cut off by the sword.

Thus, after an eventful and important period of about 12 years from his conversion, after a variety of toils and exercises among friends, and open foes, and nominal christians, by a death more gentle than commonly fell to the lot of martyrs, rested in Jesus, the magnanimous and charitable spirit of Cyprian of Carthage.

Before Cyprian's time, Africa appears to have been in no very flourishing state with respect to christianity. Within 12 years he was the instrument of most material service in recovering many apostates, in reforming discipline, and in reviving the essence of godliness.

CHAPTER XV.

Other Particulars of Valerian's Persecution.

BY order of Valerian, Sixtus, bishop of Rome, and some others of the clergy were seized. While Sixtus was going to execution, Laurentius, his chief deacon, followed him weeping, and said, "Whither goest thou, father, without thy son?" Sixtus said, "You shall follow me in three days."

After Sixtus' death the prefect of Rome, moved by an idle report of the immense riches of the Roman church, sent for Laurentius, and ordered him to deliver them up. Laurentius, requested a little time to set every thing in order, and to take an account of each particular; three days having been granted, he collected all the poor who were supported by the Roman church, and went to the prefect and said, "Come, behold the riches of our God; you shall see a large court full of golden vessels." The prefect followed him, but seeing all the poor people, he turned to Laurentius with looks full of anger." "What are you displeased at?" said the martyr; "the gold you so eager desire is but a vile metal taken out of the earth, and serves as an incitement to all sorts of crimes; the true gold is that Light whose disciples these poor men are. The misery of their bodies is an advantage to their souls; sin is the true disease; the great ones of the earth are the truly poor and contemptible. These are the treasures which I promised you, to which I will add precious stones. Behold these virgins and widows; they are the church's crown; make use of these riches for the advantage of Rome, of the emperor, and yourself."

Doubtless, had the prefect's mind been at all disposed to receive an instructive lesson, he would here have learned the nature of the liberality of christians, who maintained a great number of objects, and who looked for no recompense, but that which shall take place at the resurrection of the just. But as the persecutors would not hear the doctrines of Christ explained, so neither would they patiently endure an exemplification of his precepts. The prefect was cut to the quick; "Do you mock me?" said he, "I know you value yourselves for contemning death, and therefore you shall not die at once." He caused him to be stripped, extended, and fastened to a gridiron, and in that manner to be broiled to death by a slow fire.—When he had continued a considerable time on one side, he said to the prefect, "Let me be turned, I am sufficiently broiled on one side." And when they had turned him he said, "It is enough, ye may eat."—Then looking up to heaven, he prayed for the conversion of Rome, and gave up the ghost!

At Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, a child named Cyril, shewed uncommon fortitude. Neither threats nor blows could prevent him from owning christianity.—He was driven from his home by his own father, and persecuted by many children of his own age. He was brought before the judge, who promised that he should be pardoned and be again received by his father. He replied, "I rejoice to bear your reproaches; God will receive me; I am glad that I am expelled out of our house; I shall have a better mansion; I fear not death, because it will introduce me into a better life." The judge ordered him to be bound and led to the place of execution, with secret orders to bring him back, hoping that the sight of the fire might overcome his resolution. Cyril remained inflexible. The humanity of the judge induced him still to continue his remonstrances. The young martyr stood firm. "Your fire and your sword," said he, "are insignificant. I go to a better house and more excellent riches; dispatch me presently, that I may enjoy them." The spectators wept through compassion. "You should rather rejoice," said he, "in conducting me to my punishment. You know not what a city I am going to inhabit, nor what is my hope." Thus he went to his death, and was the admiration of the whole city.

Many others suffered with great christian meekness and fortitude. But after three years employed in persecution, Valerian was taken prisoner by Sapor king of Persia, who detained him the rest of his life, and made use of his neck when he mounted his horse, and at length had him flayed and salted. Valerian had known and respected the christians; his persecution therefore must have been a sin against light, and it is common with Divine providence to punish such in a very exemplary manner.

Gallienus, son to Valerian, succeeded him, and was an emperor friendly to the christians; he stopped the persecution by edicts, and gave the pastors of churches licence to return to their respective charges.

CHAPTER XVI.

From the reign of Gallienus to the end of the Century.

WE now behold christians legally tolerated under a Pagan government for forty years. The example of Gallienus was followed by the successive emperors to the end of the century, and was violated only in one instance; the effect of which was presently dissipated by the hand of Providence. This is not a season for the growth of grace and holiness; genuine christianity, during this period, was very little manifested.

Though christianity, at this time was literally tolerated, yet christians were not entirely exempt from persecution. At Cæsarea, in Palestine, there was one Marinus, a soldier of great bravery, of noble family, and very opulent. The office of centurion being vacant, Marinus was called to it. Another soldier came before the tribunal, and said, that by the laws Marinus was incapacitated, because he was a christian, and did not do sacrifice to the emperors; but that he himself, as next in rank, ought to have it. Achæus, the governor, asked Marinus what was his religion; on which he confessed himself a christian. The governor gave him three hours to deliberate. Upon this Theotecnes, bishop of Cæsarea, calls Marinus from the tribunal, takes him by the hand, and leads him to the church, shows him a sword that hung by his side, and a New Testament which he pulled out of his pocket, and bids him choose which of the two he liked best. Marinus, stretching out his hand, takes the Holy Scripture. "Hold fast then," said Theotecnes, "cleave to God, and what you have chosen you shall enjoy, being strengthened by him, and depart in peace." After he had returned thence he was, by the crier's voice, ordered to appear again at the bar, the time of three hours being expired. There he manfully confessed the faith of Christ, heard the sentence of condemnation, and was beheaded.

The greatest luminary in the church at this time, was Dionysius, of Alexandria. He took a decided stand against the Sabellian heresy, which confounded the persons of the Trinity.

Paul, of Samosata, attempted, about the year 269, by many artful subtilties to depreciate, the real Divinity of Jesus Christ, and introduce into the church the doctrine of Socinianism. But he was, by the pastors, called to an account, deposed from office and excluded from christian fellowship. The doctrine usually called Trinitarian, was universal in these times.

Aurelian succeeded Gallienus, and Tacitus, Aurelian, who, after a short reign, left the empire to Probus, in whose second year A. D. 277, appeared the monstrous heresy of Manes, whose fundamental principle was to account for the origin of moral evil, by the admission of two first causes, independent of each other. This heresy continued long to infest the church.

In the year two hundred and eighty four, Dioclesian became emperor, and for about eighteen years was extremely indulgent to christians. His wife, Prisca, and daughter Valeria, the eunuchs of his palace and many of his important officers, with their wives and families embraced the gospel and made a public profession of their faith. In various parts of the empire, vast crowds attended religious service, so that the houses of worship were found inadequate to their accommodation, and in all the cities, large edifices were erected for their use. The number of nominal converts now increased, but vital piety declined. The influence of philosophers, with whom they were connected, was one of the causes.

Toward the end of this century, Dioclesian, practising the superstitious rites of divination, attributed the ill success of his sacrifices to the presence of a christian servant who made on his forehead the sign of the cross. He ordered all present and all in his palace to sacrifice, or, in case of refusal, to be scourged with whips. He wrote also to the officers of his armies to constrain all the soldiers to sacrifice, and to discharge from service those who should refuse to comply with this rite of heathen superstition. Many resigned rather then submit to the impious direction. Christian truth was not yet lost, and though its influence was diminished, it was not yet perceptible. Very few were put to death on account of their religious profession.

But Marcellus, the centurion, did not escape. At Tangier in Mauritania, while every one was employed in feasting and sacrifices, he took off his belt, threw down his vine branch and his arms, and added, "I will not fight any longer under the banner of your emperor, or serve your gods of wood and stone. If the condition of a soldier is such that he is obliged to sacrifice to gods and emperors, I abandon the vine branch and the belt, and quit the service." Marcellus, having thus refused to partake in idolatrous worship, was ordered to be beheaded.

These preliminaries to the persecution, with which the next century opens, did not affect the minds of christians in general; nor was the spirit of prayer excited among them; a certain sign of great declension in godliness. Justification by faith, hearty conviction of sin, and the Spirit's influences, are scarcely mentioned all this season.

God, who had exercised long suffering patience, declared at length in the course of his providence, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused *my fury to rest upon thee.*"

But this scene, which materially changed the condition of the church, and was quickly followed by several surprising revolutions, belongs to the next century.

CHAPTER XVII.

Some Account of Gregory Thaumaturgus, Theognostus, and Dionysius of Rome.

GREGORY was born at Neacæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia, and early educated in idolatry and the learning of the Gentile world. He travelled afterwards to Alexandria, and put himself under the tuition of the renowned Origen, by whom he was persuaded to study the Holy Scriptures. Origen spared no pains to ground him in a firm belief of christianity, and exhorted him to apply his knowledge to its promotion, advising him withal to pray fervently and seriously for the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

On his return to his native city, which was very populous and full of idolatry, the very seat of Satan, he gave himself much to prayer and retirement, and was in secret prepared for the important work to which he was soon after called.

In this idolatrous city, Gregory commenced his public labors, when the church consisted of not more than seventeen members; but his preaching was soon attended with so great success that he had a numerous congregation. His ministry appears to have been accompanied with miraculous gifts, to prepare the way for the propagation of the gospel among his idolatrous countrymen.

Here he continued till the Decian persecution, which was most severe. Considering that his new converts would scarce be strong enough to stand their ground and be faithful, he advised them to flee, and to encourage them in it, set the example. Many of his people suffered, but God, at length, restored them to peace, and Gregory returned to exhilarate their minds with his pastoral labors.

A little before his death, he made a strict inquiry, whether there were any in the city and neighborhood still strangers to christianity, and being told there were about seventeen in all, he sighed, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him, that any of his fellow-townsmen should remain unacquainted with salvation, yet that his thankfulness was due to God, that when at first he had found only seventeen christians, he had left only seventeen idolaters. Having prayed for the conversion of infidels and edification of the faithful, he peaceably gave up his soul to God. He was a man eminently holy and most exemplary in his life and conversation. In worship most devout, in conversation chaste, he never allowed himself to call his brother fool; no anger or bitterness proceeded from his mouth. Slander and calumny, as directly opposite to christianity, he peculiarly hated and avoided. The wonderful success which attended his ministry, was owing to a marvellous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In no particular instance was the divine influence ever more apparent since the apostolic age.

Theognostus and Dionysius, of Alexandria, were both firm in the great doctrine of the Trinity in Unity During the first three hundred years, though this doctrine was variously opposed, yet the whole christian church constantly united in preserving and maintaining it, even from the apostles' days, as the proper sphere within which, all the truth, and holiness, and consolation of genuine christianity lie, and exclusive of which, one may defy its boldest enemies to produce a single instance of any real progress in piety, made in any place, where the name of Christ was known.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The further extension of the Gospel in this Century.

IN the midst of the Decian persecution, about the year two hundred and fifty, the gospel, which had hitherto been chiefly confined to the neighborhood of Lyons and Vienne, was considerably extended in France. Churches were founded at Toulouse, Tours, Arles, Narbonne, and Paris. France, in general, was blessed with the light of salvation. The bishops of Toulouse and Paris afterwards suffered for the faith of Christ.

In the course of this century Germany, especially those parts nearest to France; also Great Britain and the adjacent isles, received the gospel.

Many of the Goths, settled in Thrace, were, like wise, brought from a state perfectly savage, into the light and comfort of christianity, through the instrumentality of some teachers from Asia.

The barbarians, who ravaged Asia, carried away with them into captivity several bishops, who healed diseases, expelled evil spirits in the name of Christ and preached christianity. They were heard with respect and attention, and numbers were converted.—This is all that I can collect of the extension of the gospel among those savage nations.

CHAPTER XIX.

Remarks on the state of the Roman Empire, and the effect which a belief of the doctrines of christianity had during this century.

IN the Roman empire, luxury and every abominable vice which can be conceived, had for three centuries greatly increased. Civil broils and distractions continually prevailed, and increased the quantity of vice and misery. During this period christianity, in its benign efficacy and power, was exemplified in the lives of God's people.

Those, who were truly converted to the christian faith, believed heartily the truth of doctrines the most humiliating. They were poor in spirit, patient under the severest treatment and the most cruel injuries, not because they were not sufficiently numerous and powerful to have redressed the wrongs which they suffered, but because they saw the sinfulness of their hearts, and were conscious that they deserved much greater evils than they experienced; they were contented in the meanest circumstances, because they felt the beauty of *his* condescension, who, though he was rich, became poor for their sakes, and who has provided for them a sure and eternal inheritance. They were serene and confident in God, because they viewed him as their Father, through the grace of Christ; full of charity, because they knew the love of God in Christ; in honor preferring others to themselves, because they were ever conscious of their own depravity; in fine, they gladly endured reproach for Christ's sake, because they knew his kingdom was not of this world.

The state of the empire was not deteriorated by the prevalence of christianity within its limits, but the grace of God, in the gift of a Savior, was gloriously displayed, in the benign nature of true benevolence, as exemplified in the lives of the truly godly, as contrasted with the real tendency of selfishness, fostering every passion which sets man at variance with man, and is in its very nature hostile to national and individual happiness.

CENTURY IV.

CHAPTER I.

The persecution of Dioclesian.

THE fourth century opens with a persecution more systematically planned, and more artfully conducted, than those which christians had ever before known, and the reason why the church survived the storm and rose triumphant after her losses was, because her DEFENDER is invincible.

The church had long been in a state of ease and prosperity, and had deeply declined from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. God, for her declension, visited her with a rod. Besides the martyrdom of Marcellus, in Africa, an attempt was made, in a general, covert manner, to corrupt the army. It was put to the choice of christian officers to sacrifice and enjoy their dignity, or to refuse and be deprived. Many lost their preferments. Some few were put to death as a terror to the rest. Dioclesian had long favored the christians, but he had now contracted a prejudice against them. He first used artifice rather than violence.

This emperor had a partner called Maximian. Under them were two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius. Constantius had some probity and humanity. The other three were tyrants. The savageness of Galerius was the most ferocious. In the year 302 he met Dioclesian at Nicomedia, in the 19th year of his reign, and used every measure to instigate him to be more sanguinary and decisive against the christians, and urged to a general persecution. Dioclesian was for confining it to the officers of the court and the soldiers.

A council of a few judges and officers was called: it was determined that the oracle of Apollo, at Miletus, should be consulted; the oracle answered in favor of a general persecution.

The feast of the Terminalia was the day appointed to commence the operations against the church.—Early in the morning an officer, with guards, came to the great church at Nicomedia, and bursting the doors, found the Scriptures and burnt them, and gave every thing up to plunder. The two emperors, looking at the scene from the palace, were long in doubt, whether they should order the edifice to be burnt. Dioclesian, fearing a general conflagration, advised to its demolition. The Prætorian soldiers were therefore sent with axes and other tools, who, in a few hours levelled the building with the ground.

The next day an edict appeared, depriving all men professing the christian religion, of all honor and dignity, exposing them to torture, and debarring them from the benefit of the laws in all cases whatever. A christian was found hardy enough, under the transports of indignation, to pull down and tear the edict. For his indiscretion he was burnt alive, and bore his sufferings with admirable patience.

In Egypt many were beheaded, others were burnt. They suffered with the greatest faith and fortitude.—To their last breath they employed themselves in psalms and thanksgiving. Phileas, a man of great eminence, suffered at Thebais; being asked how he was persuaded that Jesus Christ was God, he replied, "He made the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead." When asked, "Is a crucified person a God?" he answered, "He was crucified for our salvation." The governor said, "You are rich, and able to maintain almost all the province, I spare you, and advise you to sacrifice." It seems that Phileas was very liberal to the poor.—The governor added, "Thy poor wife looks on thee." Phileas answered, Jesus Christ is the Savior of all our spirits, he hath called me to the inheritance of his glory, and he may call her to it." A little before his execution, "My children," said he, "you that seek God, watch over your hearts. My dear children, stick fast to the precepts of Jesus Christ."

This persecuting governor who treated the christians with the greatest cruelty and severity, added, "No care ought to be taken of these christians; let all treat them as unworthy of the name of men." Some expired under the cruel tortures inflicted upon them. Others, having been recovered by methods taken to heal them, and being reduced to the alternative of sacrificing or dying, cheerfully preferred the latter.

One city in Phrygia, being generally christian, was besieged by armed men, and set on fire. The men with their wives and children were burnt to death, calling upon Christ, the God over all. All the inhabitants, magistrates and people, nobles and plebeians, professing christianity, were ordered to sacrifice, and for refusing suffered in this manner.

Some were slain by axes, as in Arabia; some by breaking their legs, as in Cappadocia; some, suspended by the feet, with the head downward, over a slow fire, were suffocated, as in Mesopotamia; some were mutilated, and cut in pieces, as in Alexandria; some were burnt to death, as in Antioch. Some despatched themselves, to prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, by throwing themselves down from the tops of houses; lamentable instances of impatience! But the reader will remember that the decline had been very great from christian purity; and that so many should suffer like christians, in such a season, can scarce be accounted for, but on the idea of the Lord's reviving his work and ministering the Holy Spirit amidst their afflictions.

The persecuting judges exercised ingenious malice in the daily invention of new punishments; but wearied, at length, with murder, and affecting to praise the clemency of the emperors, as desirous to save life, contented themselves with plucking out eyes, and cutting off one of the legs. The number of those who suffered in this way was very great; and they were afterwards condemned to work in the mines.

At Antioch, Romanus, a deacon, of the church of Cæsarea, was martyred. He, happening to enter Antioch at the very time when the churches were demolished, saw many men and women, most probably apostates from christianty, with their little ones, crowding to the temples and sacrifices. The same spirit which moved Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees, on a like occasion, was felt by him, but exerted in a manner more agreeable to the christian dispensation.—He cried aloud, and rebuked their cowardice and perfidy. But being seized immediately, and condemned to the flames, and fastened to the stake, while the executioners expected the definitive order of the emperor then present, he asked cheerfully, "Where is the fire for me?" Cæsar, provoked at his boldness, ordered his tongue to be cut out. This he put out with great readiness. After this punishment he was thrown into prison, and suffered there a considerable time. In the end he was dismissed from life by strangling.

In the second year, when the persecution grew fiercer, imperial letters were sent into Palestine, commanding all men, without exception, to sacrifice. At Gaza, Timotheus, after many sufferings, was consumed by a slow fire; some were condemned to the wild beasts. While many apostatized to save their lives, six persons of Cæsarea, with excessive forwardness, ran to Urbanus, the judge, and offered themselves for martyrdom. They suffered, in conjunction with two others, whose spirit and circumstances in the manner of their departure out of life, were more conformable to the rules of the gospel.

The governors of the different provinces being now authorized to punish the christians freely, did it as their tempers dictated. Some, for fear of displeasing, did more than they were ordered; others indulged a natural savageness of disposition; while others considered that to shed blood profusely was the high road to preferment. Some, determining to torment and not to kill, studied those arts of torture, which might keep life in being amid the keenest sensations of pain. Many efforts were made to recover the tortured, that they might be strengthened to endure further sufferings. A considerable part of Roman jurisprudence was then employed on this subject.

There never before had been so systematic and labored an effort made to extinguish the gospel of Christ. Satan had great wrath; and when we consider how fiercely the enemies of christianity set upon its professors, we have cause to admire the grace of God, who raised such a noble army of martyrs, in a time of so great evangelical declension, and who more effectually than ever baffled, in the end, the designs of the Prince of darkness.

In France alone, and its neighborhood, the people of God found some shelter. Yet was the mild Constantius, to save appearances with his superior Maximian, induced to persecute, not only by destroying the temples, but also, by ordering those of his household to quit the service, who would not retract christianity. By this means were the christians of his family tried. But the issue was contrary to their expectations. Constantius retained the faithful, and dismissed the apostates, judging that those, who were unfaithful to their God, would also be so to their prince.

It appears to have been the intention of the persecutors to have destroyed all records of christianity. Felix of Tibiura, in Africa, being asked to deliver up the scriptures, answered, "I have them, but will not part with them." He was ordered to be beheaded. "I thank thee, O Lord," said the honest martyr, "that I have lived fifty six years, have kept my virginity, have preserved the gospel, and have preached faith and truth. O my Lord, Jesus Christ, the God of heaven and earth, I bow my head to be sacrificed to thee, who livest to all eternity."

In Sicily, Euplius a martyr, being asked, "Why do you keep the scriptures forbidden by the emperors," answered, "because I am a christian. Life eternal is in them; he that gives them up, loses life eternal." He suffered in the same cause, and so also did many others in Italy.

In the year three hundred and five, Dioclesian resigned the empire, and Maximian followed his example. They were succeeded by Galerius in the East, who ruled in the room of Dioclesian, and put Maximin his nephew, in his own place, and in the West by Constantius.

Maximin inherited the savageness and the prejudices of his uncle; and in Palestine and the more eastern parts, over which Galerius had ruled, he still continued the horrors of persecution.

Apphian, a young man under twenty, who had received a very polite education at Berytus, and could not bear to live with his father and relations at Pagæ in Lycia, because of their aversion to the gospel, left all his secular employments and hopes for the love of Christ, and came to Cæsarea; there he was so transported with zeal as to run up to Urbanus the governor, then making a libation, to seize him by the hand, to stop his religious employment, and exhort him to forsake idolatry, and turn to the true God. The consequence was, he was arrested, ordered to sacrifice, and, after he had sustained most dreadful tortures, was thrown into the sea. His imprudence was great, and his zeal very irregular and extravagant; but who will not admire the sincerity of that love of Christ, which carried this ardent youth through all hardships, and prefer his disposition, with all his faults, to the cowardice and love of the world, which, in our times, prevents such numbers from daring to show due regard for the divine Savior?

This Apphian had a brother called Edesius, who had advanced farther in the philosophical studies than himself, and who likewise embraced the faith of Christ. Having endured, in Palestine, with great fortitude and patience, prisons, bonds, and the drudgery of the mines, he, at length, came to Alexandria, and there saw the judge raging with frantic fury against christians, treating them with various abuses. Fired at the sight, he lost all patience, rebuked the magistrate, and struck him. Upon which he was exposed to a variety of torture, and thrown into the sea. He seems to have possessed both the excellencies and the faults of his brother. A remark or two may be proper in this place, before we proceed.

1. The persecution we are reviewing found the church in the lowest state in wisdom and piety. Concerning the behavior of Edesius, it should be observed, that amidst the great dearth of christian instruction, it is not surprising that he should so imperfectly know his duty. The piety of Apphian and Edesius resembles that of Jeptha and of Samson; sincere, but irregular and injudicious. They lived under similar circumstances, in times of ignorance. The Spirit of God, when he creates a new heart, or a new spirit, and disposes men to obedience, supercedes not the use of pastoral instruction. Where this is, to a great degree wanting, even Divine love itself, though strong, is, comparatively speaking, blind, and will continually mistake the rule of duty. In vain we look for judicious and discreet pastors, and for clear and evangelical views in all this period. No Cyprian or Dionysius the appeared, to check, to regulate, or to control the spirits of christians, and to discipline them by scripture rules. The persecution found vast numbers perfidious and cowardly; some chosen spirits, were humble and faithful to death; but of these, many, it is to be feared, were partially informed of their duty, both to God and man, and mixed the intemperance and precipitation of blind self-will, with the love of Christ.

2. In the story of these two brothers, we see the prevalence of the monastic and philosophic spirit; that they knew too little of christianity, and though sincere enough to become martyrs for Christ, yet they were greatly destitute of christian simplicity. The doctrines of Christ had ceased to be explicitly unfolded; and it was chiefly in suffering, endured with patient faith and cheerful hope, that we can now see, Christ had then a church in the world. The bush was indeed burning in a fire the most dreadful, but not consumed.

In the fourth year of the persecution, Maximin Cæsar, exhibited spectacles in honor of his birth-day.

Agapius, a christian, and a slave who had murdered his master, were both produced at the same time and condemned to the wild beasts. The emperor, to distinguish his birth-day by an act of generosity, pardoned and gave freedom to the murderer. The whole amphitheatre rang with acclamation in praise of his clemency. But he, disposed to punish the innocent and spare the guilty, asked Agapius if he would renounce christianity, promising liberty on that condition. The martyr expressed his cheerful readiness to undergo any punishment, not for any crime committed by him, but for piety toward the Lord of the universe. He was condemed to be torn by a bear, was then carried back to prison; and, after he had lived a day, with weights hung to his feet, sunk in the sea.

In the succeeding year a Tyrian virgin, Theodocia, not quite 18 years old, was put to death for owning and countenancing some christian prisoners. The judge, Urbanus, afterward condemned them to the mines of Palestine. Silvanus, with some others, were condemned to labor in the brass mines, the joints of their feet having been first weakened by the application of hot iron.

Few persecutors exceeded Urbanus in malice and activity. He doomed three to fight with each other; Auxentius, a venerable saint, he condemned to the wild beasts. Some he sentenced to the mines, after he had made them eunuchs. Others, after bitter torments, he threw again into prison. This monster of savage ferocity, having been afterward convicted of crimes, was capitally punished in Cæsarea, the scene of his cruelties, and by the same Maximin, of whose imperial savageness he had been the minister.

In the sixth year of the persecution, near 100 were sent from Thebais to Palestine, and were adjudged by Fermilian, the successor of Urbanus, to be lamed in the left foot, and to lose the right eye, and in that state to be condemned to the mines.

At Gaza, some were apprehended for meeting together to hear the scriptures read, and were punished with the loss of a limb, and an eye, or in a still more cruel manner. One Paul, being sentenced to lose his head, begged a short space of time to be allowed him, which having been granted, he prayed with a loud voice for the whole christian world, that God would forgive them, remove the present heavy scourge of their iniquities, and restore them to peace and liberty; he then prayed for the Jews, that they might come to God, and find access to him through Jesus Christ. In the next place, that the same blessings might be vouchsafed to the Samaritans. The Gentiles, who lived in error and ignorance of God, were the next objects of his charitable petitions, that they might be brought to know God and to serve him: nor did he omit to mention the crowd about him, the judge who had sentenced him, the emperors and the executioner, and in the hearing of all he prayed that their sin might not be laid to their charge. The whole company was moved, and tears were shed. The martyr composed himself to suffer, and offering his neck to the sword was beheaded. Divine grace appeared in him, in a manner worthy of the apostolic age. Soon after 130 Egyptian chieftains, having sufferod the same mutilations which have above been mentioned, were sentenced by Maximin to the mines in Palestine and Celicia.

Fermilian, after having trodden in the steps of Urbanus in shedding christian blood abundantly, like him also suffered capitally by the sentence of the emperor.

Toward the end of the seventh year, the multitude of confessors in the mines of Palestine enjoyed some liberty, and even erected some places for public worship. The president of the province envied them the small cessation of their miseries, and wrote to the emperor to their prejudice. Afterward the master of the mines having come hither, divided the sufferers into classes. Some he ordered to dwell in Cyprus, others in Libanus; the rest he dispersed and harrassed with various drudgeries in different parts of Palestine. Four, he singled out for the examination of the military commander, who burnt them to death. Silvanus, a bishop of great piety, John, an Egyptian, and thirty seven others, were, the same day, beheaded by the order of Maximin.

For eight years, the persecution in the East, continued with little intermission. In the West, it abated after two years. The political changes in the empire account for the difference. Both in the East, and the West, Satan exerted his malice in the keenest manner, in this last of the pagan persecutions.—The Divine power and wisdom, in still preserving a real church on earth, were never more conspicuously displayed, since the days of the apostles. The time, for its external triumph, under Constantine, was then at hand. Those, who look at outward things alone may be tempted to think how much more glorious it would have appeared, without the previous desolations of Dioclesian's persecution; but when it is considered how much christian doctrine had decayed, and how low holy practice had fallen, the necessity of so sharp a trial to purify the church, and fit it for a state of prosperity, is evident. Otherwise the difference between christians and pagans might have been little more than a name.

Evangelical doctrines and practices, in their life and purity, had grievously declined from about the year 270. During this season of declension, Christ crucified, justification purely by faith, and the effectual influences of the Holy Spirit, together with humbling views of man's total apostacy and corruption, were ideas very faintly impressed on christian minds. But in this low state of the church, there was much more moral virtue, than could be found any where else; and the charitable spirit of many in suffering, shewed the existence and nature of real religion.

The persecution, which was carried on against the christians, designed their total destruction; it must, however, in justice to them be acknowledged, that they were, with all their faults, the most loyal, peaceable, and worthy citizens in the whole empire.

God was then raising up a protector for his church. The emperor Constantius lying at the point of death, desired Galerius, his partner in the East, to send him his son Constantine. The eastern emperor, having delayed as long as possible, sent him at last, and the son arrived in Briton just in time to see his father alive, who was interred at Eboracum.* Constantine succeeding, gave the most perfect toleration to christians, so far as his power extended. Providence was still with him, that, like another Cyrus, he might give peace and liberty to the church.—Rome and Italy were for some time under the power of Maxentius, the son of Dioclesian's colleague Maximian. This prince, a tyrant of the basest character, attempted the chastity of a Roman matron, who by suicide, prevented his base design. Her impatience gives further proof of the prevailing taste in religion. Constantine having come from France into Italy, subverted the kingdom of Maxentius, and became sole master of the western world. Maximian, whose daughter Constantine had married, after various attempts to recover the power, which by the influence of Dioclesian he had resigned, was put to death by his son-in-law for attempting his destruction.

Galerius, in the year 310, was smitten with an incurable disease; all his lower parts were corrupted: physicians and idols were applied to, in vain: an intolerable stench spread itself over the palace of Sardis, where he resided: he was devoured by worms; and, in a situation the most dreadful, continued a whole year. Softened at length by his sufferings, in the year 311, he published an edict, by which he took off the persecution from the christians, allowed them to rebuild their places of worship, and desired them to pray for his health. Thus did God himself subdue this haughty tyrant.

The prisoners were then released from the mines and the highways were full of christians returning to their friends, singing psalms and hymns to God. Christendom wore a cheerful aspect. Even Pagans were melted; and many, who had joined in the attempt to extinguish the christian name, began to be convinced, that a religion, which had sustained such repeated and formidable attacks, was Divine and invincible.

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* Now York.

Soon after the edict of Galerius, he expired, his body being altogether corrupted. Syria and Egypt, with their dependencies, remained still under Maximin. Here he renewed the persecution with much malevolence and artifice. Under certain pretences, he forbad christians to assemble in their church-yards, and then privately procured petitions from various cities, praying that they might not be encouraged in their precincts. Great efforts were made to revive declining Paganism, and sacrifices were offered with great assiduity. Persons of quality filled the highest offices of idolatry, and pains were taken to prevent christians from building places of worship, or from practising the duties of their religion in public or private; and the former methods of compelling them to sacrifice were renewed. Maximin, to render his idolatrous priests more respectable, clothed them with white mantles, such as were worn by the ministers of the palace. Incited by the example of the tyrant, all the Pagans in his dominions strove to effect, if possible the ruin of the church, and human ingenuity was exerted to invent calumnies in support of the kingdom of darkness.

When falshood and slander are paid for by a government, they will not want propagators.

Certain acts of Pilate and our Savior were forged, full of blasphemy, which, by Maximin's approbation, were circulated through his dominions, with orders to facilitate their publication in all places, and to direct school-masters to deliver them to the youth, that they might commit them to memory. A certain officer at Damascus, also engaged some infamous women to confess, that they had been christians, and privy to the lascivious pactices which were committed on the Lord's day in their assemblies. These and other slanders were registered, copied, and sent to the emperor, as the authenticated confessions of these women, and he took measures to give them universal publicity. The officer who invented this calumny, destroyed himself sometime after by his own hand. Maximin, affecting still the praise of clemency, gave orders to the prefects, not to take away the lives of christians, but to punish them with loss of eyes, and various amputations. A few persons of high christian renown were deprived of life, the rest were harrassed by other kinds of suffering short of death, and no arts were left unemployed to eradicate christianity out of the mind and to educate the next generation in a confirmed aversion to it.

Never were christians so dispirited and clouded, as during this period. Thus low did God suffer his church to fall, to try its faith, and to purify it, in the furnace. But man's extremity was the opportunity in which the truth and goodness of God appeared most conspicuous. A drought commenced, and an unexpected famine oppressed the dominion of Maximin, followed by a dreadful plague and inflamed ulcers. The plague and famine raged in the most terrible manner, and multitudes lay unburied: numbers of Pagans were neglected by their own friends; but christians were every day employed in taking care of the sick, giving the rites of burial to the dead, and in distributing food to the famished poor. In this, they manifested the enlarged and disinterested philanthropy, the pure characteristic and matchless benevolence of their holy religion.

In the year three hundred and thirteen there was a war between Licinius and Maximin, who contended each for the complete sovereignty of the East. Before the decisive battle, Maximin vowed to Jupiter, that if he obtained the victory, he would abolish the christian name. Licinius, in a dream, was directed to supplicate, with all his army, the Supreme God, in a solemn manner. He gave orders to his soldiers to do so, and they prayed in the field of battle, using the words which he had received in his dream. The contest, between Jehovah and Jupiter, was now at its height and drawing to a crisis; victory decided in favor of Licinius. Maximin published a cautious decree, in which he forbade the molestation of christians, but did not allow them the liberty of public worship. Licinius published a complete toleration of christianty.

Maximin, in the sad reverse of his affairs, slew many priests and prophets of his gods, by whose enchantments he had been seduced with false hopes of universal empire in the East, and issued another edict granting full toleration to chistianity. So greatly were affairs now changed, that contending emperors courted the favor of the poor persecuted christians. After this, Maximin, struck with a sudden plague, over his whole body, pined away with hunger, fell down from his bed, his flesh consumed and dropped off from his bones, his eyes leaped from their sockets; and perceiving God thus executing judgment upon him, frantic with agony, he cried out; "It was not I, but others who did it." At length, by the increasing force of torment, he owned his guilt, and every now and then implored Christ, that he would compassionate his misery. He confessed himself vanquished, and gave up the ghost.

Thus closed the most memorable of all the attacks of Satan on the christian church.

The arm of God was lifted up in this wonderful manner, to chastise and to purify the church, and to demonstrate to the proudest and fiercest of his enemies, that the gospel was divine, and must stand in the earth invincible; that the MOST HIGH ruleth and will have a church in the world, which shall glorify him in spite of earth and hell united, and that this church contains in it all that deserves the name of true wisdom, of true virtue.

CHAPTER II.

A view of the State of the Christian Religion on its Establishment under Constantine.

THIS emperor from early life had some predilection in favor of christianity. Marching from France into Italy against Maxentius, on an expedition, which was likely either to exalt or to ruin him, he was oppressed with deep anxiety. Some God he thought necessary to protect him. The God of the christians he was most inclined to respect; with his true character he was unacquainted, but desired to learn it. He prayed with much vehemence and importunity. God left him not unanswered. While he was marching with his forces, in the afternoon, the trophy of the cross appeared very luminous in the heavens, higher than the sun, with this inscription, "Conquer by this."—He and his soldiers were astonished at the sight. At night Christ appeared to him when asleep, with the same sign of the cross, and directed him to make use of the symbol as his military ensign. Constantine obeyed, and the cross was henceforward displayed in his armies.

Constantine asked the christian pastors who this God was, and what was the meaning of the sign.—They told him it was God, the only begotten Son of the only true God, and that the sign was the trophy of the victory, which he, when on earth, had gained over death. At the same time, they explained to him the causes of his coming, and the doctrine of his incarnation. From that time Constantine firmly believed the truth of christianity. After this he began to read the scriptures, and zealously patronized the pastors of the church all his days.

He succeeded in his warlike enterprize, and became master of Rome. He now set himself to build churches, and shewed great beneficence to the poor. He encouraged the meeting of bishops in synods, honored them with his presence and employed himself in continually aggrandizing the church. In the mean time Licinius began to persecute the church, prohibited christian synods in his dominions, expelled believers from his court, forbad the women to attend the public assemblies of men, and ordered them to furnish themselves with separate teachers of their own sex. He dismissed from his armies those who refused to sacrifice, and forbad any supplies to be afforded them in their necessities. He murdered bishops and destroyed churches. He commenced a war with

Constantine, and in the issue lost his empire and his life.—The spirit of godliness was now low. The external appearance of the church was splendid.—An emperor powerful, engaged for the support and propagation of christianity, forbids sacrifices, erects churches, seeks with much zeal for the sepulchre of Christ at Jerusalem, and honors it with a most expensive sacred edifice. His mother Helena fills the whole Roman world with her munificent acts, in support of religion, and after the erection of churches and travelling from place to place to evince her zeal, dies at an advanced age, in the presence of her son. Nor is the christian cause neglected even out of the bounds of the Roman empire. Constantine pleads zealously, in a letter to Sapor king of Persia, for the christians of his dominions, he destroys idol temples, prohibits Pagan rites, puts an end to savage fights of gladiators, stands up with respectful silence to hear the sermon of Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, furnishes him with the volumes of the scriptures for the use of the churches, orders the festivals of the martyrs, has prayers and the reading of the scriptures at his court, dedicates churches with great solemnity, makes christian orations himself, directs the sacred observation of the Lord's day, to which he adds that of Friday also, the day of Christ's crucifixion, and teaches the soldiers of his army to pray by a short form made for their use. At this period external piety flourished, monastic societies in some places were also growing, but faith, love, and heavenly mindedness, appear very rare.—The doctrine of real conversion was very much lost, or external baptism was placed in its stead, and the true doctrine of justification by faith, and the true practical use of a crucified Savior for troubled consciences, were scarce to be seen. There was much outward religion, but this could not make men saints in heart and life. True humility and charity were little known in the christian world, while superstition and self-righteousness were making rapid progress, and the real gospel of Christ was hid from men who professed it.

The schism of the Donatists arose from a contested election of a bishop at Carthage. Cæcilian the deacon had the suffrage of the whole church. Two disappointed persons who aspired to the office protested against the election, and were joined by Lucilla, a rich lady, who had been for a long time too haughty to submit to discipline. One Donatus offered himself as chief of the faction. A number of bishops cooperated with him, piqued that they had not been called to the ordination of Cæcilian. Seventy bishops met at Carthage, to depose Cæcilian, who had the hearts of the people, and against whom they could not object any crime, nor support the least material accusation. Yet they persevered, and ordained one Majorinus a servant of the factious lady, who, to support the ordination, gave large sums of money, which the bishops divided among themselves. This shows how corrupt many of the pastors of the African church were at this period.

Pure doctrinal truth was then too commonly mere speculation. Men were ripe for a perversion of doctrine. A bold and open assault was made against the Deity of the Son of God, to the grief of all who loved HIM, and walked in his ways in godly simplicity.

CHAPTER III.

The Progress of the Arian Controversy till the death of Constantine.

PETER, bishop of Alexandria, had suffered martyrdom under the Dioclesian persecution. At that time, numbers had recanted to save their lives, and among the rest, Meletus, an Egyptian bishop. This man was of a schismatical and enterprizing spirit, and having been deposed by Peter before his martyrdom, separated himself, continued bishop on his own plan, and ordained others, and thus became head of the Meletian party. This, however, was not the only person who disturbed the peace of the church, and tried the patience of Peter. Arius of Alexandria espoused the cause of Meletus. Afterward he left this party, became reconciled to Peter, and was by him ordained deacon. Arius, having exhibited a restless and factious spirit, was again expelled from the church.

Peter having been called to his rest by martyrdom, Achillas succeeded him in the bishopric, and from him Arius, by submissions again obtained favor. Understanding and capacity will command respect, and these were undoubtedly possessed by Arius in a great degree. He was by nature formed to deceive. In his behavior and manner of life he was severe and grave; in his person tall and venerable, and in his dress almost monastic. In conversation, he was agreeable and captivating, well skilled in logic and all the improvements of the human mind, then fashionable in the world.

Such was the famous Arius, who gave name to one of the most powerful heresies which ever afflicted the church of Christ.

Achillas advanced Arius to the office of presbyter. Alexander, the successor of Achillas, treated him with respect, and he appeared backward to censure him for his dangerous speculations in religion. Arius, through the pride of reasoning, asserted, that there was a time when the Son of God was not, that he was capable of virtue or of vice, and that he was a creature, and mutable as creatures are. While Arius was insinuating these things, the easiness of Alexander in tolerating such notions was found fault with in the church. Necessity roused him at length, however unwilling, to contend, and in disputing before Arius and the rest of the clergy, he affirmed there was a union in the Trinity. Arius eagerly insisted, that "if the Father begat the Son, the begotten had a beginning of existence; hence it was evident there was a time when he was not."

Many persons of a grave cast, and able and eloquent, like Arius, espoused and fostered the infant heresy. Arius preached diligently at his church, diffused his opinions in all companies, and gained over many of the common people; and Alexander saw the ancient doctrine continually undermined. Lenient measures and argumentative methods having been tried in vain, Alexander summoned a synod of bishops, who met at Alexandria, condemned Arius' doctrine, and expelled him from the church, with nine of his adherents.

Arius maintained that the *Son* was totally and *essentially* distinct from the *Father*; that he was the *first* and *noblest* of those beings whom God the Father had created out of nothing, the instrument by whose subordinate operation the *Almighty Father* formed the universe, and therefore inferior to the *Father* both in *nature* and *dignity.*

To all humble and charitable christians, it appeared, that to persist in blaspheming God, was, at least, as practical an evil, as to persist in drunkenness and theft; and all who feared God, felt themselves obligated to join with Alexander against Arius.

The christian world was now the scene of animosity and contention. The orthodox and the heretical did each, their utmost, to support their several pretensions: practical religion was too much forgotten by both. The Pagan world beheld and triumphed. On their theatres they ridiculed the contentions of christians, to which, their long and grievous provocations of their God had exposed them. Alexander repeatedly, in letters and appeals, maintained his cause, so far as speculative argumentation could do it, and proved his point from the scriptures, while Arius strengthened himself by forming alliances with various bishops; particularly with Eusebius of Nicomedia, who supported Arianism with all his might. Near one hundred bishops in a second synod at Alexandria condemned Arius, who was then obliged to quit that place, and to try to gain supporters in other parts of the empire.

Constantine sincerely strove to make up the breach. He wrote both to Alexander and Arius, blamed both, expressed his desire for their agreement, and explained nothing. He sent the letter by Hosius bishop of Corduba, one whose faith and piety had been distinguished in the late persecution. Hosius endeavored to make up the breach; but it was impossible. The two parties were formed, and were determined; worldly motives were too prominent in both, to admit of an easy compromise; and it was not in the power of those who loved both truth and peace, to sacrifice the former for the latter, consistently with a good conscience, however sincerely desirous they must have been of promoting both. The object of contention was not a trifle, but an essential principle in religion.

Constantine summoned the aid of the whole christian church; and three hundred and eighteen bishops met at Nice, in Bithynia. According to Philostorgius, the Arian historian, twenty two espoused the cause of Arius; others make the minority still less. Many presbyters were there besides the bishops; it is not probable, that the whole number of persons assembled in the council was less than six hundred.

They met in the year three hundred and twenty five, being transported to Nice, and maintained there at the emperor's expense.

Before they entered on the immediate business of the Synod, their attention was engaged by certain Gentile philosophers who appeared among them; of these, some wished to satisfy their own curiosity concerning christianity itself; others, to involve the christians in a cloud of verbal subtleties, that they might enjoy the mutual contradictions of the followers of Christ. One of these distinguished himself by the pomp and arrogancy of his pretensions, and derided the clergy as ignorant and illiterate. On this occasion, an old christian, who had suffered with magnanimous constancy during the late persecution, though unacquainted with logical forms, undertook to contend with the philosopher: those who were more earnest to gratify curiosity than to investigate truth, endeavored to make mirth of him, while all the serious were distressed to see a contest apparently so unequal. Respect for the man, however, induced them to permit him to engage. He immediately addressed the philosopher in these terms: "Hear, philosopher, in the name of Jesus Christ. There is one God the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, who made all these things by the power of his Word, and confirmed them by the holiness of his Spirit. This WORD, whom we call the Son of God, compassionating the sons of men, involved in error and wickedness, chose to be born of a woman, to converse with men, and to die for them; and he will come again, the Judge of all things which men have done in the body; that these things are so, we believe in simplicity; do not then labor in vain, seeking to confute things which ought to be received by faith, and investigating the manner in which these things may or may not be: but if thou believest, answer me, now that I ask thee." Struck with this plain, authoritative address, the philosopher said, "I do believe;" with pleasure owned himself vanquished, confessed that he embraced the same sentiments with the old man, and advised the other philosophers to do the same, declaring that he was changed by a divine influence, and was moved by an energy he could not explain.

Here it is evident that this successful espouser of the truth, stepped forth in its defence, in humble dependence on God to bless his own word with victorious energy; and it was evident by the issue, that the faith of the vanquished stood not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

I fear we shall not find in the whole Nicene business so instructive a narrative. The emperor himself came to the synod, and exhorted them to peace and unanimity. A number of mutual accusations having been presented to him, he threw them all into the fire, protesting that he had not read one of them, and charged them to forbear and forgive one another. He then gave them leave to enter directly on the business of the synod. They canvassed the doctrine of Arius, extracted his propositions from his own writings, and argued the subject with great vehemence; Constantine himself acting as moderator, and endeavoring to bring them to perfect agreement. But it soon appeared, that without some explanatory terms, decisively pointing out what the scripture had revealed, it was impossible to guard against the subtilties of the Arians. Did the Trinitarians assert, that Christ was God? The Arians allowed it, but in the same sense that holy men and angels are stiled gods in scripture. Did they affirm that he was truly God? the others allowed that he was made so by God. Did they affirm that the Son was naturally God? it was granted: for even we, said they, are of God, of whom are all things. Was it affirmed, that the Son was the power, wisdom and image of the Father? we admit it, replied the others, for we also are said to be the image and glory of God. What could the Trinitarians do in this situation? to leave the matter undecided was to do nothing; to confine themselves merely to scripture terms, was to suffer the Arians to explain the doctrine in their own way, and to reply nothing. Undoubtedly they had a right to comment according to their own judgment, as well as the Arians; and they did so in the following manner. They collected together the passages of scripture, which represent the Divinity of the Son of God, and observed, that, taken together, they amounted to a proof of his being of the SAME SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER: That creatures were indeed said to be of God, because not existing of themselves, they had their beginning from him, but that the Son was peculiarly of the Father, being of his substance, as begotten of him.

The majority of the council was convinced that this was a fair explanation. The venerable Hosius, of Corduba was appointed to draw up a creed, which, in the main, is the same that is called the Nicene creed to this day. This soon received the sanction of the council, and of Constantine himself, who declared that whoever refused to comply with the decree, should be banished.

Here we have the testimony of nearly the whole christian world, in favor of the doctrine of the proper Deity of the Son of God, a testimony free, unbiassed, and unrestrained. How can this be accounted for but hence, that they followed the plain sense of scripture and of the church in preceding ages?

Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and forbidden to enter Alexandria. The minority at first refused to subscribe, but being advised to yield, at length, by Constantia their patroness, the emperor's sister, 20 of the 22 Arian bishops consented. But by the omission of a single letter they reserved to themselves their own sense, subscribing not that the Son is the same, but only of the like essence with the Father.* Arius and his associates were banished into Illyricum.

The Meletian controversy was also settled.—Meletius was permitted to live in his own city, with the title of bishop, but without authority. His sect was indulged in some degree, and continued a long time after in the church.

The canons of this famous council forbid clergymen to make themselves eunuchs; also the ordination of new converts; and provided for the chastity of the clergy.

These, with some other regulations for the government of the christian church, shew that the fear of God was by no means extinct. Discipline, which had been relaxed toward the close of the last century, was revived, and the predominant spirit of superstition carried it, as formerly, into too great an extreme.

Liberty was allowed to the Novatians also to return to the communion of the general church, nor was it insisted on, that they should be re-baptized, since they held nothing contrary to the fundamental principles of godliness. With respect to the followers of Paul of Samosata, called Paulianists, some of whom still subsisted, it was required, that if they were admitted again into the church they should be re-baptized, because they did not baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. So accurately did they distinguish between a heretic and a schismatic, between essentials and circumstantials. Apostolical discernment and piety, in no contemptible degree, animated the spirits of the Nicene fathers, notwithstanding the decline of piety from the primitive times.*

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* It is remarkable, that this duplicity is recorded by Philostorgius the Arian historian.

Constantine, zealous for a pacific uniformity, having invited Acesius a Novatian bishop to the council, asked him whether he assented to the decrees of the council concerning the faith. The council, said he, has decreed nothing new concerning these things. So I have always understood the church has received from the days of the apostles. Why then, said the emperor, do you separate yourself from our communion? Because, replied Acesius, we think that to apostatize is the "sin unto death," and that those who are guilty of it ought never to be restored to the communion of the church, though they are to be invited to repentance, and to be left to God, who alone has the power of forgiving sins. Constantine, who saw that his views were impracticably severe, said, "Set up a ladder, Acesius, and climb up to heaven by yourself."

From this testimony it appears that the church had, from the days of the apostles, been in the belief of the proper Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Three months after the dissolution of the council of Nice, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nice, were banished by the emperor's command, for attempting still to support the Arian cause.

Alexander, in five months after his return home died: having desired that Athanasius might be appointed his successor. Alexandria, in general, joined in the same request, and he was ordained as a successor to the zealous Alexander. He was then not above twenty eight years of age, and held the see forty six years, exposed, with little intermission, to persecution, on account of his zeal against Arianism. In this he manifested great constancy and firmness in support of the truth.

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* Not a few of these bore on their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus. One, debilitated by the application of hot iron to both his hands; some, deprived of their right eyes: others, deprived of their legs. A crowd of martyrs collected in one body!

After the death of Helena, Constantine shewed peculiar kindness to Constantia his sister, who was in the Arian interest. She on her death-bed prevailed with her brother to do justice to these men. The emperor suffered himself to be imposed on by the Arian party, and wrote in their favor to the churches. Eusebius and Theognis, by owning the Nicene faith in words were restored to their sees. The former wrote to Athanasius, desiring him to receive Arius, now returning from banishment, to communion: but in vain, Athanasius had principle, and could not sport with subscriptions and bonds, as his adversaries did.

The Nicene creed had still all the sanction which church and state could give it. It was not then possible, by all the artifice of ingenious and unprincipled men, to persuade the christian world, that the scripture held what it did not, or that their fathers had all along thought as Arius did. Even the chiefs of Arianism had been now restored, not as Arians, but as men well affected to the doctrine of the Trinity. And they attempted by subtilty and artifice to establish, at length, what was impossible to be done by fair argument. Determined to ruin Athanasius, if possible, they united themselves closely with the Meletians, and infected them with their heresy. They procured the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch, an eloquent and learned professor, who was, on unjust pretences, banished from his see. This person, before his departure, exhorted his flock to be steadfast in the truth, and his words were of great weight with that flourishing church. He and several priests and deacons were banished. The good man bore the will of God with meekness and patience, and died in exile at Philippi. Thus while the truth was supported in form, its friends, by a variety of artifices, were persecuted, and its enemies triumphed. Men void of principle had every secular advantage, while those, who feared God, chose rather to suffer than to sin.

Among these, Athanasius was eminently distinguished. Rebellion, oppression, rape and murder, were maliciously charged upon him. He was accused with having murdered Arsenius, a Meletian bishop; for proof of which the accusers produced a box, out of which they took a dead man's hand, dried and salted, affirming it to be the hand of Arsenius, preserved by Athanasius for magical purposes. The Meletians charged Arsenius to conceal himself till they should have effected their purpose. The party of Eusebius of Nicomedia, spread the report through the christian world, that Arsenius had been privately murdered by the bishop of Alexandria, and Constantine himself, overcome by incessant importunities, was induced to order an enquiry to be made.

Athanasius had learned by his own experience, that any accusation against himself, however improbable, was likely to find numerous and powerful supports. But Providence wonderfully confuted this attempt. Arsenius had privately conveyed himself to Tyre, intending to be secreted there during the session of the Synod. Some servants, belonging to Archelaus the governor, heard a rumor whispered, that Arsenius was in town. This they immediately told their master, who discovered his retreat, apprehended him, and gave notice to Athanasius. The Meletian tool, feeling the awkwardness of his situation, denied himself to be Arsenius. Paul, the bishop of Tyre knew the man, and deprived him of that refuge. The day of trial having come, the prosecutors boasted that they should give occular demonstration to the court of the guilt of Athanasius, and produced the hand. A shout of victory rung through the synod. Silence having been made, Athanasius asked the judges, if any of them knew Arsenius? Several having affirmed that they did, Athanasius directed the man to be brought into the court, and asked, "Is this the man whom I murdered and whose hand I cut off?" Athanasius turned back the man's cloak and showed one of his hands; after a little pause, he put back the other side of the cloak, and showed the other hand. "Gentlemen, you see," said he, "that Arsenius has both his hands: how the accusers came by the third hand, let them explain." Thus ended the plot to the shame of the contrivers.

Those, who were concerned in this villany, were opposed to the real faith of Christ; and enmity to the doctrine of the Trinity produced this shameful plot.

Notwithstanding the clearest proofs of Athanasius' innocence, and though the whole course of his life was extremely opposite to such crimes as he was charged with, yet his enemies so far prevailed, that commissioners were despatched into Egypt to examine the matters of which he was accused. Yet John the Melitian bishop, the chief contriver of the plot, confessed his fault to Athanasius, and begged his forgiveness. And Arsenius himself renounced his former connexions, and desired to be received into communion with Athanasius.

The Arian commissioners having arrived at Alexandria, endeavored to extort evidence against the accused by drawn swords, whips, clubs, and all engines of cruelty. The Alexandrian clergy desired to give evidence in favor of Athanasius, but were refused. They remonstrated to no purpose. The commissioners having returned with extorted evidence to Tyre, whither the accused, who saw no justice was to be obtained, had fled, passed sentence, and deposed him from his bishopric.

Athanasius came to Constantinople, and desired justice from the emperor, and a fair trial. Constantine ordered the bishops of the synod to appear before him, and to give an account of what they had done. The greatest part of them returned home. But Eusebius of Nicomedia, sticking at no fraud, and ashamed of no villany, with a few of the synod, went to Constantinople, and waving the old accusations, brought a fresh one, alleging that Athanasius had threatened to stop the fleet that brought corn from Alexandria to Constantinople. Constantine was credulous enough to be moved by the report: the Arian arts prevailed at court: those, who used no arms but truth and honesty, were, for the present, foiled, and Athanasius was banished to Treves in Gaul.

Arius, flushed with the success of his party, returned to Alexandria, and strengthened the hands of the heretics, who had long languished for want of his abilities. The city being torn with intestine divisions, the emperor ordered the heresiarch to come to Constantinople, and then to give an account of his conduct.—That imperial city had now become the chief seat of contention, and Providence had given her a bishop not unequal to the contest. This was Alexander of Constantinople, a man of eminent piety and integrity.—Eusebius of Nicomedia menaced him with deposition and exile, unless he consented to receive Arius into the church. He could not consent to admit a wolf among the sheep, who could agree in form to the Nicene faith, and yet gradually insinuate his poison into the church. Alexander betook himself to prayer, and spent several days and nights in his church, in earnest cries to God for help. The faithful followed his example, and prayer was made by the church without ceasing, that God would interfere on this occasion.

Constantine himself was not to be prevailed on to admit Arius into the church, unless he were convinced of his orthodoxy. He sent for him to the palace, and asked him plainly, whether he agreed to the Nicene decrees. The heresiarch, without hesitation, subscribed: the emperor ordered him to swear: he assented to this also. Constantine, whose scruples were now overcome, ordered Alexander to receive him into the church the next day. Alexander had given himself to fasting and prayer, and renewed his supplications that day with great fervor, prostrate before the altar, attended only by Macarius a presbyter belonging to Athinasius. He begged, that if Arius was in the right, he himself might not live to see the day of contest; but if the faith which he professed was true, that Arius, the author of all the evils, might suffer the punishment of his impiety. The next day seemed to be a triumphant one to the Arians: the heads of the party paraded through the city with Arius in the midst, and drew the attention of all toward them. When they came nigh to the forum of Constantine, a sudden terror, with a disorder of the bowels, seized Arius. He asked for a place, where he might retire and ease himself, and being told there was one behind the forum, he hasted thither, and fainted; and his bowels were poured out with a vast effusion of blood. Such was the exit of the famous Arius.—Thus God heard the prayers of his church and sent them deliverance, and confounded the adversaries of Zion.

What effect this event had on Constantine, is not known. He died soon after, in the 65th year of his age, having first received baptism from Eusebius of Nicomedia.

CHAPTER IV.

The progress of the Arian Controversy during the Reign of Constantius.

THE great Constantine was succeeded by three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. The first ruled in Spain and Gaul, the second in the East, the third in Italy and Africa. The other relations of the late emperor were put to death by the soldiers. Two sons alone of Julias his brother survived, Gallus and Julian. These were spared, privately educated, placed among the clergy, and appointed readers in the church. The latter was born at Constantinople, was only eight years old at the time of his uncle's death, and was reserved to be a scourge to degenerate christendom, and a memorable instrument of Divine Providence.

By Constantine the eldest, Athanasius was recalled from banishment, to his church at Alexandria, where he was received with general acclamations.—Constantine was afterwards slain by the troops of his brother Constans.

Constantius, with the empress his wife, was infected with the Arian heresy, and did much to support the Arian interest.

In the year three hundred and forty, died the famous Eusebius of Cæsarea. He was the most learned of all the christians; but a man of courtly manners, and one who associated with Arius in the condemnation of Athanasius. His case is one of the many which shew that learning and philosophy, unless duly subordinated to the revealed will of God, are unfriendly to christian simplicity.

Alexander of Constantinople, the great and able opposer of Arianism, died at this time, and was succeeded by Paul, a young man discreet and pious. Constantius was displeased at the election of Paul, encouraged an Arian council, directed its resolves, and Eusebius of Nicomedia was translated to Constantinople, where, from this time, Arian government continued forty years. Thus the ancient usages in choosing bishops were altered, and a precedent was set of fixing in the hands of princes the government of churches in capital cities. A council, of 100 bishops of Egypt, with Athanasius at their head, protested to the christian world against these proceedings.

Another council, convened at Antioch, and support- by the presence of the emperor, undertook to depose Athanasius, and ordain Gregory in his room. They prevailed on Constantius to direct Philagrius, the prefect of Egypt, to support their proceedings by an armed force. Gregory commenced a violent persecution against the friends of Athanasius, a number of whom he caused to be scourged and imprisoned. Athanasius himself fled from the storm, and made his escape to Rome.

The church now found herself not free from persecution, even when Pagans had ceased to reign.—Gregory would not even suffer the Athanasians to pray in their own houses, who in great numbers still refused to own the Arian domination. He visited Egypt in company with Philagrius, and inflicted on those bishops who had been zealous for the Nicene faith, the greatest severities.

The means of defence which Athanasius used were solid arguments, patience and fervent prayers to God.

The Arians must bear the infamy of being the first who secularized the discipline of the church.

Athanasius continued an exile at Rome 18 months, under the protection of Julius the bishop. Eusebius, of Constantinople, one of the most memorable villians in history, died soon after in the fulness of that prosperity, which his iniquity and oppression had procured him. A double election followed his death, that of Paul, and that of Macedonius. Hermogenes, master of the militia, was ordered by the emperor to banish Paul. He did so, and Paul's friends exasperated by persecution, forgot the character of christians and killed Hermogenes. This happened in the year 342. Paul, however, was then banished the city, and his holy character exempted him from all suspicion of being concerned in the outrage.

In the year 349 died Gregory, the secular bishop of Alexandria. Then it was that Constantius, intimidated by the threats of his brother Constans, wrote repeatedly to Athanasius to return into the East, and assured him of his favor and protection. Complying at length, with the request, he travelled to Antioch and was graciously received by Constantius, who assured him with oaths, that he would for the future, receive no calumnies against him. While at Antioch, Athanasius communicated with the Eustathians, who under the direction of Flavian, held a conventicle there. This Flavian was the first who invented the doxology, *Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.* This is agreeable to the Nicene faith.

Sabellians and Arians, at that time, opposed each other, and assaulted the truth which was at variance from what they both embraced. While those who were taught of God, sincerely worshipped the Trinity in Unity, and mourned over the abominations of the times.

After the death of Constans, Constantius having become sole master of the empire, revived the persecution. Paul, of Constantinople, was sent into Mesopotamia loaded with irons, and at length to Cucasus, on the confines of Cappadocia, where, after having suffered cruel hardships, he was strangled. Macedonius succeeded him, in Constantinople, by an armed force, with much effusion of blood.

The weak mind of Constantius was again prejudiced, by calumnies against Athanasius, and he joined with the Arians to effect his ruin, and to give ascendency as far as possible to Arianism; he even attempted to impose an Arian creed upon a council convened at Milan in the year three hundred and fifty five, from the consideration that God had declared in his favor by his victories. The people, attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, because they read it in their bibles, rejected the creed of Constantius, and it was pressed no further. The condemnation of Athanasius, was, however, insisted on, and Dionysius, bishop of Milan and some others, were most unreasonably required to subscribe to it. "Obey, or be banished," was the imperial mandate. The bishops lifted up their hands to heaven, and told Constantius, that the empire was not his but God's, and reminded him of the day of judgment. He drew his sword on them in a rage, but contented himself with their banishment. The greatest part of the bishops, however, subscribed to the condemnation of Athanasius: a few only testified that the grace of God was still as powerful as ever in supporting his people, and in causing them to suffer gladly, rather than to sin. Those who did not subscribe were banished. The venerable Hosius, of Corduba, then one hundred years old, who had been a confessor under the Dioclesian persecution, who had presided sixty years in the church, and also in the Nicene council, was unsubdued. Flattery and menaces were both employed to prevail on him to condemn Athanasius: but he stood firm, and sharply rebuked Constantius for his unreasonable conduct toward him, and reminded him of his accountability at the day of judgment for what he was then endeavoring to effect.

This persecution raged so violently, that Arianism seemed well nigh to have avenged the cause of fallen idolatry. Supported by the secular power, it then reigned and glutted itself in blood. The pagans took courage and assisted the heretics in the persecution, saying, the Arians have embraced our religion. A bishop was found base enough to support those proceedings. It was George of Cappadocia, who began his usurpation in the year three hundred and fifty six. Through his influence, supported by the secular arm, the friends of the Nicene faith were cruelly beaten, and some died under the anguish. The greatest cruelties were exercised by that monster of the Arian faith.

Constantius, in a letter to the people of Alexandria, represents this same George as one very capable of instructing others in heavenly things. Athanasius, having seen this letter, was deterred from his intended journey to the emperor, betook himself to the deserts, and visited the monks. Those were his most faithful adherents, who refused to discover him to his adversaries, and who offered their throats to the sword with a readiness to die for the Nicene faith.

The contest was evidently between truth and error. The opposing sects manifested, in their lives, the contrary influence and tendency of the adverse doctrines which they respectively embraced. It must, however, be acknowledged that the Trinitarians did not attend, in the degree which they ought to have done, to the connexion which subsists between doctrine and practice. Christian godliness continued very low in all this period.

The persecution reached even to Gaul, which had yet happily preserved the simplicity of the apostolical confession unmolested. Hosius, above one hundred years old, having suffered scourges and tortures, submitted, at length, to subscribe an Arian creed. He lived, however, to retract, protesting against the violence with which he had been treated, and with his last breath exhorted all men to reject the heresy of Arius. Hosius remained in his heart true to his God, and proved that the Lord faileth not them that are his.

The Arians made creeds upon creeds, expressed in artful ambiguities, to impose on the unwary: but the power of divine grace was displayed in preserving a remnant in this disastrous season. Athanasius, and a few faithful brethren stood firm.

Constantius liberally supported the most expensive forms and ornaments of christian worship while he was laboring with all his might to eradicate christian doctrine.

The Arians, then victorious, began to shew themselves disunited, and separated into two parties. In these confusions, Macedonius lost the see of Constantinople, which was given to Eudoxius, who was translated from Antioch in the year three hundred and sixty. Eudoxius denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. The adherents to this sentiment, by the advantage of sober manners, spread themselves among the monasteries and increased the corruption which then pervaded the christian world. To this error Athanasius showed himself a faithful and vigilant opposer.

In the year three hundred and sixty one, Constantius died of a fever, having received baptism a little before he expired. He was a weak man, armed with despotic power, capable of doing incredible mischief in the church of Christ, and died, as he lived, an Arian.

CHAPTER V.

A View of Monasticism and other Micellaneous Circumstances from the establishment of Christianity under Constantine to the death of Constantius.

WE are not to form an idea of ancient monks from modern ones. It was wrong in holy men of old to retire altogether from the world. But there is every reason to believe this practice originated in piety.—The enormous evils of monasticism are to be ascribed to its degeneracy in after-times, not to its first institution. What could be better intended than the determination of Anthony to follow literally our Lord's directions; "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor?" Was he ignorant, and superstitious? He was both. But he persevered to the age of 105 years in voluntary poverty with admirable consistency.

It was a great disadvantage to Anthony's judgment, that he was unwilling to be instructed in literature.—He pushed the desire of solitude to rigors before unknown: Though his faith in Christ was obscure, yet was his sincerity evident, and his love to Divine things ardent. He preached well by his life, and temper, and spirit, however much he failed in doctrinal knowledge.

During the Dioclesian persecution, Anthony left his beloved solitude, came to Alexandria and strengthened the minds of christian sufferers, exposing himself to danger for his love of the brethren, and yet was not guilty of delivering himself up to martyrdom. Thus, on some occasions, he appeared in the world.

While the Arian heresy raged, he entered Alexandria, and protested against its impiety, observing, it was of a piece with heathenism itself, "Be assured," said he, "all nature is moved with indignation against those, who reckon the creator of all things to be a creature." In conversing with pagan philosophers, Anthony observed, that christianity held the mystery, not in the wisdom of Græcian reasoning, but in the power of faith supplied to them from God by Jesus Christ.—He exhorted them to believe and know that the christian art is not merely verbal, but of faith which worketh by love.

Anthony, however, sullied all his evangelical piety, by a foolish attempt to make mankind believe that he lived without food, while he ate in secret, and by a vain parade concerning temperance, which savored more of Pythagorean fanaticism than of christian piety. In his extreme old age he gave particular directions, that his body should be interred, not preserved in a house, after the Egyptian manner of honoring deceased saints and martyrs, and charged his two attendants to let no man know the place of his burial. "At the resurrection of the dead, I shall receive my body," said he, "from the Savior, incorruptible." He expired with cheerfulness.

The ancient heresies were now in a declining state. Imperial favors were extended to heretics, in proportion to the cordiality and ardor with which they embraced erroneous sentiments. The church of the *holy sepulchre*, at Jerusalem, was about this time, built with singular magnificence, and dedicated to Arian purposes with much pomp and ceremony. Splendor, however, excluded sincerity, and formality usurped the place of spiritual understanding. Thus that scripture was fulfilled concerning the hypocrisy of professors in the christian times, "your brethren, that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified."

CHAPTER VI.

The Extension of the Gospel from the Beginning of the Century to the Death of Constantius.

THIS period is far more fruitful in ecclesiastical contentions, than it is remarkable for the extension of christianity. Abyssinia appears to have received the gospel and to have erected many churches in this century.

The Iberians too, a people bordering on the Black Sea, received the gospel, about this time, through the exemplary life and conversation of a christian woman, whom they had, in a military excursion, taken prisoner. She is said to have wrought miracles among them.—I shall mention only those, which may seem worthy of some credit. A child of the king's was sent to the women of the country to be cured, if any of them knew a proper method of treating it—a well known ancient custom. The cause baffled their united skill, and the child was delivered to the captive woman.—"Christ," said she, "who healed many, will also heal this infant." She prayed, and it recovered.—In the same manner the queen herself was healed of a distemper some time after. "It is not my work," said the captive woman, "but that of Christ the Son of God, the Maker of the world." The king sent the captive presents in token of his gratitude. But she sent them back, assuring him, that "godliness was her riches, and that she would look on it, as the noblest present, if he would worship the God whom she adored." The next day the king, while hunting, was lost in a thick mist, and implored in vain the aid of his gods. In his distress, recollecting the words of the woman, he prayed to the God whom she worshipped. The mist was instantly dispersed, and the king found his way home. In consequence of this event, and of future conferences with the captive, both the king and queen embraced the gospel, and exhorted their subjects to receive it. An embassy was sent to Constantine, to desire that pastors might be commissioned to instruct them. The emperor gave the ambassadors a very gracious reception.

The gospel was introduced about this time into Arabia Felix. Probably it also flourished in humble obscurity in Britain, pure France. The nations bordering on the Rhine, were now christian; and the Goths near the Danube, about 60 years before, had been civilized at least by the bishops whom they had carried captive under Gallienus: and most probably the Spirit of God attended their labors. Armenia had likewise embraced christianity, and by means of commerce conveyed it into Persia, where converts began to be numerous.

There, because the christians would not pollute themselves with the worship of the sun, they underwent a very grievous persecution. In this the Magi and the Jews were peculiarly instrumental; and the people of God suffered with so much sincerity and fortitude, as to evince that the Lord had many people belonging to himself in Persia.

CHAPTER VII.

The Decline of Idolatry in this Century to the Death of Constantius.

THE first measures of Constantine, after his success in Italy, were to place christianity on an equal footing with paganism by the laws, while he gradually patronized the church more and more. He abolished the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. After he had become sole master of the empire, he forbad the private exercise of divination, the great bulwark of false religion. But he still allowed the public use of it at the altars and temples. Some time after, he prohibited the worst branches of sorcery and magic. He took particular care to secure the observation of the Lord's day, and ordered it to be set apart for prayer and holy exercises. He publicly declared, that he would not oblige men, to be christians though he earnestly desired they would be, nor did he abolish the rites of the temples. Finding, however, the pagans extremely obstinate in the preservation of their superstitions, he publicly exposed the mysteries, which had hitherto been kept secret, melted down the golden statues, and caused brazen ones to be drawn by ropes through the streets of Constantinople. And some of the temples, which had been scenes of horrible wickedness, he destroyed.

In Egypt, the famous cubit, with which the idolatrous priests were wont to measure the height of the Nile, was kept in the temple of Serapis. This, by Constantine's order, was removed to the church at Alexandria. The pagans beheld the removal with indignation, and ventured to predict, that the Nile would no longer overflow its banks. Divine Providence, however, smiled on the schemes of Constantine, and the Nile the next year overflowed the country in an uncommon degree. In this gradual manner was paganism overturned; sacrifices in a partial manner still continued, but the entire destruction of idolatry seemed to be at hand. The temples for the most part stood, though much defaced, and deprived of their former dignity and importance. The sons of Constantine followed his example in aiding the progress of christianity.—They made an express edict for the abolition of the sacrifices.

Constantius at Rome, solemnly prohibited magic in all its various forms, took away the altar and image of victory which stood in the portico of the capital, and manifested great zeal against idolatry.

Such was the state of paganism at the death of Constantius. Pagans were, however, exceedingly numerous, and enjoyed with silent pleasure the long and shameful scenes of Arian controversy in the church.

Nor were they hopeless. The eyes of the votaries of the gods were all directed to his successor, the warlike, the zealous Julian, a determined foe of the gospel. Great things had been done for the church; but its rulers of the house of Constantine were weak and void of true piety. In the warm imaginations of many devotees, even Jupiter himself seemed likely *to grow terrible again, and be again adored.* This last struggle of expiring paganism, marked as it is with signal instances of Providence, deserves particular attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

Julian's attempt to restore Paganism.

THE world in no age ever saw a greater zealot for paganism than Julian. Temper, talents, power and resentment, all conspired to cherish his superstitious attachments. He had seen nothing agreeable in the effects of the gospel on his uncle and his cousins. He had seen the christian world torn with factions and deformed by ambition. He had experienced many family wrongs from those who professed religion. Though he affected a zeal for the cause during the reign of Constantius, yet it appears that he had not read the New-Testament with that close attention, which led him to see that the doctrines there inculcated, required a life very different from what he saw in the leaders of the christian world, both civil and ecclesiastical.

He was a man of uncommon genius and capacity, and came into power under the full influence of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. All that the wit and prudence of man could do, he attempted, to subvert christianity and to restore paganism. If he failed in his attempts, it was because his arms were levelled against heaven.

From a youth, Julian practised dissimulation with consummate artifice. No person was ever more admirably qualified to act the part which he did when he succeeded Constantius.

This happened in the year three hundred and sixty one. He ordered the temples to be set open, those that were decayed to be repaired, and new ones to be built, where he deemed it necessary. He fined the persons who had made use of the materials of such as had been demolished, and set apart the money, in this way collected, to erect new ones. Altars were universally set up, and all the rituals of pagan worship brought into use. Altars and fires, blood, perfumes and priests attending their sacrifices, were general, and the imperial palace itself had its temple and furniture. The first thing he did, every morning, was to sacrifice, and by his presence and example, he encouraged the practice among all his subjects. Heathens exulted and christians were treated with contumely. He repealed the laws made against idolatry, and confirmed its ancient honor and privileges.

To reform paganism itself was his first object, and he issued precepts for its support. To maintain it on the old system of popular belief, Julian saw was impossible. Christian light had now rendered pagan darkness visible, its deformity digustful, and its absurdity contemptible. With great importunity he exhorted magistrates to correct the vices of men, and to relieve their miseries, assuring them that the gods would reward them for their charitable acts: that it is our duty to do good to all, even to the worst of men and our bitterest enemies; and that public religion should be supported by a reverential adoration of the images of the gods, which were to be looked on as the symbols of the gods themselves. Priests, he said, should so live, as to be copies of what they preached by their own lives, and dissolute ones should be expelled from their offices. Not only wicked actions, but obscene and indecent language should be avoided by them. No idle books and wanton plays, but divine philosophy, should be the object of their serious study; they should learn sacred hymns by heart, should pray thrice or at least twice every day; and when in their turn called on to attend the temple, they should never depart from it, but give up themselves to their office.

At other times, they should not frequent the forum, nor approach the houses of the great, unless with a view of procuring relief for the indigent, or to discharge some part of their office; that in no case they should frequent the theatres, nor ever be seen in the company of a charioteer, player or dancer. In every city the most pious and virtuous should be ordained, without any consideration of their circumstances. The godly training of their own families, and their compassionate care for the indigent, would be their best recommendation. The impious Galilæans, he observed, by their singular benevolence had strengthened their party, and heathenism had suffered by the want of attention to these things.

Such was the fire which the apostate stole from heaven, and such his artifice in managing it! These rules he must have derived from the sacred scriptures, for they are not to be found in any of the heathen writers which he studied and admired. *They are rules which well deserve the attention of christian pastors in all ages.* In imitation of christians he established schools for the education of youth. He appointed lectures of religion, stated times of prayers, monasteries for devout persons, hospitals and alms-houses for the poor and diseased, and for strangers. These things he particularly recommended in a letter to Arsacius, the chief priest of Galatia. In this he tells him what it was that advanced the impious religion of the christians; that it was their kindness to strangers, their care in burying the dead, and their affected gravity. He bids him warn the priests to avoid play-houses and taverns, and sordid employments. Hospitals should be erected in every city for the reception of all sorts of indigent persons. The Galilæans, he observes, relieve both their poor and ours. He certainly learnt this language from christianity, which he ungratefully labored to destroy. It was not, however, in Julian's power to infuse that spirit into his partizans, which alone can produce such excellent fruits. It is in vain to think of destroying christian principles, and at the same time of preserving christian practice. But here is an additional testimony to the virtues of christians, from their most determined and bitter enemy; and a powerful illustration of the work of God in those ages. It must be confessed, at the same time, that the good sense and penetration of the emperor, are as conspicuous as are his malice and impiety.

The arch-apostate knew that ridicule is a powerful engine with which to assail christianity, and did not neglect to use this to render it odious, if possible, in the view of his subjects. The son of Mary, or the Galilæan, were the opprobrious titles which he gave to the blessed Jesus, and he ordered christians to be called Galilæans. To render unpopular the truly godly, and to bring christianity into disrepute, he made an act of sacrificing, the condition of preserving places of honor and authority. He used many methods to impoverish opulent christians, and otherwise to injure them, and when they complained, he sarcastically said to them; "You know what directions of passiveness under injuries your Christ has given you!" To this he added an affected encouragement of heretics and sectaries, and thus artfully embroiled the christian world with factions, by a toleration of them all, but a real want of affection for any.

Julian had the sagacity, in a way of refined policy to abstain from open persecution himself, while he connived at it in others, who knew what was agreeable to their master. A number suffered for the gospel under his reign, though not by the forms of avowed persecution.

If the gospel be indeed the light of heaven, which alone leads men to a holiness that fallen nature abhors, we see, why the public teachers of christianity are abhorred by the proud and the mighty. These, Julian charged with sedition, seized their incomes, abrogated their immunities, exposed them to civil burdens and offices, and occasionally expelled them by fraud and violence. At Antioch, the treasures of the church were seized, the clergy obliged to flee, and the churches shut. In other places he found pretences for imprisoning and torturing the pastors.

This vigilant emperor must have hated and despised the Jews: but seeing, that to encourage and advance them in their secular concerns, was an obvious means of depreciating christianity; he spake of them with compassion, begged their prayers for his success in the Persian wars, and pressed them to rebuild their temple, and restore their worship. He himself promised to defray the expense out of the exchequer, and appointed an officer to superintend the work. To strengthen the hands of such determined enemies of christianity, and to invalidate the christian prophecies concerning the desolation of the Jews, were objects highly desirable in the mind of Julian. But the enterprise was suddenly baffled, and the workmen were obliged to desist: horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundations, with repeated attacks, rendered the place inaccessible to the scorched workmen from time to time, and the element resolutely driving them to a distance, the enterprize was dropped. No historical fact, since the days of the apostles, seems better attested by credible writers than this.

To keep the church in ignorance of the arts of reasoning and philosophy, Julian suppressed learning among the christians, forbid christian school-masters to teach Gentile learning, lest being furnished, says he, with our armor, they make war upon us with our own weapons. By this deep-laid plan, he designed to effect ultimately, an entire extinction of christianity.—To this end philosophers were liberally paid by him for their invectives against the gospel.

He used ensnaring artifices to draw unwary christians into compliance with pagan superstitions. He was wont to place the images of the heathen gods near his own statues, that those who bowed to the latter, might seem to adore also the former. Those who seemed to comply, he endeavored to persuade into greater compliances; those who refused, he charged with treason, and proceeded against them as delinquents. He ordered the soldiers when they received their donatives, to throw a piece of frankincense into the fire in honor to the gods. Some few christians-who had been surprized into the practice, returned to the emperor, threw back their donatives, and professed their readiness to die for their religion. Disgrace, poverty, contempt, a moderate degree of severity, checked and disciplined by dissimulation, and every method of undermining the human spirit, were incessantly employed to subvert christianity. One cannot see how his schemes for this purpose could have failed, had Providence permitted this artful and subtile genius to have proceeded many years in this course: but what a worm is man, when he sets himself to oppose his Maker!

CHAPTER IX.

The Church under Julian.

AT this time the people of God were faint and languid in Divine things. Arianism was baneful to experimental piety and fostered pride and bitter animosity toward the truly godly. The pastors of churches were far from being intelligent or zealous, and were menaced with a most artful and malicious persecution.

However low the state of christianity was, yet we have grounds to believe there were then many real christians in the church amid all its corruptions; for the most of the public teachers and professors of christianity chose to quit their offices, rather than to forsake their religion. Julian's partiality and prejudices in favor of paganism urged him to adopt measures which filled the whole empire with confusion.

At Merum, a city of Phrygia, Amachius, the governor of the province, ordered the temple to be opened and the idols to be cleansed. Three christians, inflamed with an ardent love of virtue, rushed by night into the temples, and broke all the images. The governor, in his wrath being about to chastise many innocent persons, the culprits very generously offered themselves to punishment. He gave them the alternative, to sacrifice or die. They preferred the latter, and suffered death with excruciating tortures, more admirable in their behavior for fortitude than meekness.

At Pessinus, in Galatia, two young men suffered death in the presence of Julian. I wish I could say it was for professing the faith of Christ. But one of them had overturned an idol. The emperor put him to death in a cruel manner with his companion, their mother, and the bishop of the city.

At Ancyra, Basil, a priest, had in the former reign, opposed Arianism, and now with equal sincerity resisted idolatry. He went through the city, publicly exhorting the people to avoid polluting themselves with sacrifices. Once observing the Gentiles employed in their religious rites, he sighed, and besought God, that no christian might be guilty of such enormity. The governor upon this apprehended him, charging him with sedition, and having tortured him kept him in prison. Julian himself coming to Ancyra, sent for Basil, who reproached him for his apostacy. Julian said, he had intended to dismiss him, but was obliged to treat him severely on account of his impudence. In the end Basil suffered death by torture. It would be tedious to recite all the accounts of those who suffered from the insolent cruelty of pagans under the politic connivance and partiality of Julian during his short reign.

In the year three hundred and sixty two, George of Alexandria, the persecuting Arian, was murdered by the pagans of that city, to whom he had made himself obnoxious, by exposing their ridiculous rites.

All this time Athanasius was in concealment. After the death of George, he returned openly to his bishopric. Athanasius treated his enemies with mildness, relieved the distressed without respect of persons, restored the custom of preaching on the Trinity, removed from the sanctuary those who had made a traffic of holy things, and thus gained the affections of the people; but he was not allowed to enjoy long the sweets of liberty. The Gentile Alexandrians represented to the emperor, that he corrupted the city and all Egypt, and that if he continued there, not a pagan would be left. The consequence was, Julian ordered him to be expelled the city.

Athanasius was obliged once more to seek safety by flight. All the faithful at his departure gathered around him weeping. "We must retire a little time, friends," says he; "it is a cloud that will soon fly over." He took his leave of them, and began his flight for the obscure parts of Egypt; but finding his life in imminent danger, from the persecutors who were following him, he directed his companions to return to Alexandria, and to meet his enemies. The pursuers asked them earnestly, "Have you seen Athanasius?" "He is near," say they, "make haste and you will soon overtake him." They hasted. Athanasius secreted himself, and soon returned privately to Alexandria, where he lay concealed till the end of the persecution.

The active spirit of Julian was now bent on the distruction of the Persian monarchy; but Divine Providence was hastening his end. Toward the christian part of his subjects, Julian was a tyrant. He persecuted numbers at Antioch; there, as he passed by, he was provoked by the psalmody of the christians, particularly by the chorus which they used; "Confounded be all they that worship graven images." He ordered them to be punished. Publia, too, a widow of great reputation, with a number of virgins over whom she presided, sang and praised God as he passed by. In particular they sung such parts of the Psalms as exposed the wickedness and folly of idolatry. Julian ordered them to hold their peace, till he had passed them. On another occasion Publia encouraged them to sing as he passed, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered." Julian, in a rage, ordered her to be brought before him, and to be buffetted on each side of her face. The effects of passion seem but too visible both in the emperor and the woman; there is, however, this difference; the one had a zeal for God, the other a contempt.

God vouchsafed to his church a remarkable deliverance; for Julian, in a skirmish, was wounded mortally by a Persian lance; when, having filled his hand with blood, he cast it toward heaven, exclaiming, "O GALILEAN, THOU HAST CONQUERED!" He survived this wound but a short time, and died after a reign of one year and eight months, in the 32nd year of his age.

The interposition of Divine Providence is ever to be acknowledged in hastening the death of so formidable an enemy to his people, whose schemes seemed only to require length of time to effect the ruin of the church. But he was left to aim at too many objects at once, the restoration of idolatry, the ruin of christianity, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the conquest of Persia. That he should have pursued this last with such avidity, is an instance of the opposition of two parties to each other, both equally bent on the ruin of the church, a thing very common in history, by which the Lord frequently saves his people. How much more prudent had it been in Julian to have made an alliance with the Persian monarch, who would gladly have accepted it, and to have united with him in the destruction of christianity, against which they were both equally incensed. Thus does God infatuate the counsels of his enemies, and lead them to quarrel with one another for the good of his church, rather than to unite for its ruin.

CHAPTER X.

The Church under Jovian.

THIS prince succeeded Julian in the year 363, aged about 33 years. His reign was terminated by sudden death after a little more than seven months.

In this short reign he manifested a strong attachment to christianity, showed that in his conduct he was governed by christian principles, and a man of strict integrity.

Convinced that conscience cannot be forced, and that a voluntary religion only is acceptable to God, he made a law, by which he permitted the pagans to re-open their temples and freely to enjoy their own mode of worship. Yet he peremptorily forbad witchcraft and impostures. He suffered the public sacrifices, but put a stop to the overflowings of magic and enchantments, with which Julian had filled the empire; in fine, he granted the pagans more than Constantius had allowed, and placed them in the same state, in which they had been left by the great Constantine. In the former reign christians found themselves only nominally free; in the latter, pagans were really so. They were treated with mildness, though not with confidence.

Jovian declared christianity to be the established religion, and replaced in the standard the figure of the cross, which Julian had taken away. He ordered the christians to be restored to their churches, recalled their exiles, and reinstated them in their privileges.

Thus did Jovian prove himself the defender of christianity as the established religion, and of toleration at the same time.

Athanasius had no sooner heard of the death of Julian, than he suddenly appeared again at Alexandria, to the agreeable surprise of his people. Jovian, by letter, confirmed him in his office in the most ample manner.

When the Arians of Alexandria attempted to influence him to set over them an Arian bishop, in opposition to the claims of Athanasius, Jovian rejected their application, assuring them that Athanasius taught sound doctrine. This shows that in faith, Jovian was a Trinitarian. The care which he took of christian doctrine and piety, his integrity, and strict conscientiousness, manifested him to be a man of a sound understanding, and promised the world a wise and pious government. He seems to have been a character of the solid, not of the shining kind; the wickedness of the times was unworthy of him. He was soon removed, and so suddenly, that it was suspected, he had not died a natural death. The christians sincerely wept, the pagans in general spake well of him; the Arians soon endeavored to take advantage of his decease, and the church was once more involved in persecution.

CHAPTER XI.

The Church under Valens; the Death, Character, and Writings of Athanasius.

JOVIAN was succeeded by two brothers, Valentinian and Valens; the former governed in the West, the latter in the East. Valentinian followed the plan of Jovian in the affairs of the church. Valens, a man of weak capacity, favored Arianism, and ordered all the adherents to the Nicene faith to be expelled from Constantinople, and their churches to be shut.

Athanasius was again attacked by the enemies of christian piety. Tatian, the governor of Alexandria, by an order from Valens, attempted to drive Athanasius from that city. The good bishop stood high in the affections of his people. The governor, for some time dared not to execute his orders. But by night he broke into his church with an armed force, where Athanasius generally lodged, and sought for him in vain. Athanasius had retired, and remained four months concealed in his father's sepulchre. Valens at length recalled him, and gave him no further disturbance. About this time, Valens received baptism from an Arian bishop who prevailed with him to swear that he would never depart from the Arian creed.

Valens, being at a city of Scythia, near the mouth of the Danube, ordered Brettannio the bishop, to meet and communicate with him and his Arian attendant, who had come to the bishop's church for that purpose. Brettannio firmly refused, professing his regard for the Nicene faith, and leaving the emperor, he went to another church, and all his congregation followed him. Valens, with his attendants being left alone, was so enraged that he ordered the bishop to be banished. The Scythians were indignant at this, as he was a man renowned among them for piety and integrity, and Valens dreading their revolt, permitted him to return.

Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, being dead, the Arians chose Demophilus to succeed him, and Valens approved of the election. The orthodox elected, at the same time, Evagrius bishop of Constantinople. Valens, incensed, banished both him and the bishop who dared to ordain him. On this occasion eighty ecclesiastics were sent to the Emperor at Nicomedia to complain of his conduct. Enraged at their presumption, and yet afraid of a sedition, he gave private orders to Modestus his prefect, to murder them secretly. The execution of this order deserves to be known to all ages. The prefect pretended that he would send them into banishment, with which they cheerfully acquiesced. But he directed the mariners to set the ship on fire, as soon as they were gone to sea. The mariners did so, and getting into a boat which followed them, escaped. The burning vessel was driven by a strong west wind into the haven of Dacidizus, on the coast of Bithynia, where it was consumed, with the ministers. The intention of concealing what was done was frustrated; and the wickedness and inhumanity of the murder appeared more odious, by the meanness with which it was contrived.

Athanasius died in the year three hundred and seventy three, after he had been bishop forty six years, and having been desired to nominate a successor, he mentioned Peter, an aged saint, and the faithful companion of his labors. Let us pause a little to view the writings and character of this great man.

As a writer, Athanasius is nervous, clear, argumentative, and every where discovers the man of sense, except in the life of Anthony the monk, and other monastic pieces; the superstitions and follies of which unhappy perversion of piety, received but too liberal a support from his influence. But the true nature of the gospel was then greatly misunderstood.

Opposition to Arianism absorbed his whole soul, and he keeps it constantly in view throughout the most of his writings. He represents Arianism, as the unpardonable sin.

The incarnation of the Son of God, he describes as essential to the recovery of fallen man, and speaks of the propriety of man's being taught by HIM who is the Wisdom of the Father. Redemption by his cross he speaks of in a manner perfectly scriptural; but little, however, is to be found in him of the experience of these doctrines, and their application to the heart and conscience; nor does he dwell much on the virtues and graces of the Holy Spirit. Real virtue, was however, the attendant of orthodox sentiments alone.

In his defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, he guards it on all sides with great exactness, is not solicitous to remove its mystery, and leaves it clear and exact only so far as the scripture has explained it. He asserts invaribly the Trinity in Unity.

In his life, his conduct uniformly appears consistent and upright, sharpened too much by long and cruel opposition, yet never governed by malice, always influenced by the fear of God. Though greatly persecuted himself, yet he never inflicted persecution on others.

Peter was chosen as successor to Athanasius at Alexandria, by the whole church; but not without opposition from the Arians. Imperial violence prevailed; and many who would not subscribe to Arian sentiments, were, for their refusal, banished. Many offered their necks to the sword, rather than quit the Nicene profession. Numbers of godly men among the Goths, were murdered for the sake of their Redeemer, by the cruelty of their king Athanaric, who appears to have been an Arian.

Valens perished in a battle with the Goths in the year three hundred and seventy eight, after having reigned fourteen years.

CHAPTER XII.

The Church under Valentinian—The beginnings of Ambrose.

LET us turn our eyes to a more cheering prospect in the West; in the East the only comfortable circumstance has been, that God left himself not without witness, but marked his real church by a number of faithful sufferers. Valentinian, in the beginning of his reign, passed a law that no man should be constrained in religion. He was very indulgent toward the pagans, and treated them with lenity.

The Arians were still ambitious to make proselytes to their faith, and were indefatigable in their opposition to all who advocated the Divinity of Jesus, and they sought to support their creed by military and imperial power; but Providence, during the reign of Valentinian, raised up an able and successful opposer of this heresy.

This illustrious character was Ambrose, who was born about the year three hundred and thirty three, and was first distinguished for pleading causes in the civil law. He was appointed a judge at Milan, where he resided for five years, and was renowned for prudence and justice.

On the death of the bishop of Milan, who was an Arian, the bishops of the province met to choose a successor. The city was divided, the Arians labored vigorously to have one of their sentiment elected; the contest was warm, every thing tended toward a tumult; the bishops were consulting, and Ambrose on hearing these things hastened to the church of Milan, and exhorted the people to peace and submission to the laws. His speech being finished, an infant's voice was heard in the crowd, "*Ambrose is bishop.*" The hint was taken at once, the whole assembly cried out, "Ambrose shall be the man." The factions agreed immediately, and he whom secular pursuits had seemed to preclude from the notice of either party, was suddenly elected by universal consent.

Ambrose was astonished, and peremptorily refused; nor was any person ever more desirous to obtain the office of bishop, than he was to avoid it. He even took unjustifiable measures to bring his moral character into suspicion—his design in this was easily detected. Finding himself unable to resist their urgent importunity, he stole out of Milan at midnight, but missing his way, wandered till morning and then found himself at the gate of Milan. A guard was placed about his person till the emperor's pleasure should be known because his consent was necessary to part with a subject in office. Valentinian sincerely consented; and the consent of Ambrose alone was wanting. Again he made his escape and hid himself in the country-house of a friend. A menacing edict of the emperor brought him again to Milan, because he dared not expose his friend to imperial resentment. Ambrose yielded at length, and Valentinian gave thanks to God and our Savior that it had pleased him, to make choice of the very person to take care of men's souls, whom he had himself before appointed to preside over their temporal concerns. Valentinian received the general admonitions of Ambrose with reverence; and in particular hearing him represent the faults of some in authority with great plainness; "I knew," said the emperor, "the honesty of your character before this time, yet I consented to your ordination; follow the Divine rules, and cure the maladies into which we are prone to fall."

Ambrose was then about thirty four years old. Immediately he gave to the church and to the poor, all the gold and silver which he had. He gave also his lands to the church, reserving the income of them to his sister. His family he committed to the care of his brother. Thus disengaged from temporal concerns, he gave himself wholly to the ministry. Having read little else than civil authors, he first applied himself to the study of the scriptures. Whatever time he could spare from business, he devoted to reading; and this he continued to do after he had attained a good degree of knowledge. His public labors went hand in hand with his studies. He preached every Lord's day. By his labors Arianism was expelled from Italy.—Simplician, a presbyter from Rome, eminent for learning and piety, instructed him in theology. By this presbyter, it pleased God, to convey to Ambrose that fire of Divine love and genuine simplicity in religion, which had very much decayed since the days of Cyprian, and in this slow and effectual method, the Lord was preparing the way for another great effusion of his spirit. Ambrose now gave himself wholly to the Lord, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline.

Valentinian died in 375, after a reign of eleven years, and was succeeded by his brother Valens, who survived him about three years. Valentinian was fierce and savage by nature, though possessed of an excellent understanding, and when cool, of the soundest judgment; a fit of passion, at length cost him his life. The best use to be made of his character is, to prove how very beneficial it is to human society, that princes should be men of religion. Without this check, Valentinian might have been one of the worst of tyrants, but by the influence of religion, he passes for one of the better sort of princes.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Church of Christ under Gratian and Theodosius, till the death of the former.

GRATIAN, the elder son of Valentinian, succeeded him in Gaul, Spain, and Britain. His younger son, an infant, succeeded in Italy, and the rest of the western world. And some time after, Gratian chose Theodosius as his colleague, who reigned in the East.

Gratian, from his early years, appears to have been truly pious. One of his first actions demonstrates it. The title of high-priest always belonged to the Roman princes. This he considered to be wholly idolatrous, unbecoming a christian to assume, and refused the habit, though the pagans still gave him the title.

Gratian wrote affectionately to Ambrose, requesting him to come and afford him religious instruction, in which he thus expresses himself, "He will teach me, whom I do not deny, whom I own as my Lord and my God. I would not conceive so meanly of him as to make him a mere creature like myself, who own that I can add nothing to Christ. And yet while I seek to please the Father, in celebrating the Son, I do not fear lest the Father should envy the honors ascribed to the Son, nor do I think so highly of my powers of commendation, as to think I can increase the Divinity by my words. I extol him as I can, not as the Divinity deserves. With respect to that treatise which you gave me, I beg you would make additions to it by scriptural arguments, to prove the proper Deity of the Holy Ghost." Ambrose with great satisfaction replied most respectfully, reminds Gratian that his arguments for the Divinity of the Son, are equally conclusive in pooof of the divinity of the Holy Ghost, whom we ought not to think the Father to envy, nor ourselves who are mere creatures, to be equal with him.

Ambrose, with all his piety, while teaching with soundness the essentials of faith and love, was not free from superstition, and abounded in his encomiums on virginity. His ignorance of the scriptures before his ordination, and the influence of his sister, a zealous devotee, will account for this.

Other parts of the conduct of Ambrose, were more worthy of his understanding. He applied the vessels of the church for the redemption of captives, and was indefatigable in the instruction of catechumens.

In the year three hundred and seventy nine, Ambrose was sent for to attend the election of a new bishop at Sermium, where their former bishop, an Arian, had caused a wide departure from the faith. The empress Justina, mother of young Valentinian, was there, and being in favor of Arianism, endeavored by her authority and influence to expel Ambrose from the church: though insulted by the mob, Ambrose stood firm in his tribunal, and when an Arian woman laid hold on his habit, with a view to drag him out of the church, he resolutely said to her, "Though I am unworthy of the priesthood, it does not become you to lay hands on a pastor, you ought to fear the judgment of God." It is remarkable that she died the next day. They were struck with awe, and Artemius, an orthodox minister, was elected without molestation. The enmity of Justina afterward broke out against Ambrose in a remarkable manner.

Constantinople had now for forty years been subject to Arian impiety and tyranny. In this great city few remained who understood the religion of the gospel: truth and godliness had fled. Gregory, of Nazianzum was appointed to recover this wretched city, if possible, to the purity of the gospel. Theodosius cooperated with Gregory, and other zealous pastors for the revival of christianity in the East, in the year three hundred and eighty. He published a law reprobating the Arian heresy, and warmly approbating the Nicene faith. He gave notice to Demophilus, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, to embrace the Nicene creed, to unite the people, and live in peace. Demophilus rejecting the proposal, the emperor ordered him to give up the churches. The heresiarch struggled to support his cause, but finding himself unsuccessful, retired to Beræa, where he died six years after.

Gregory being now confirmed at Constantinople, at the call of the emperor, three hundred and fifty bishops came thither, to settle the distracted state of the Eastern church. The council was very disorderly and confused, little was done, except defining very accurately the doctrine of the Trinity, and enlarging a little on the Nicene creed.

In the year 383, Amphilochus, bishop of Iconium, coming to court with other bishops, paid the usual respects to the emperor, but took no notice of his son Arcadius, about six years old, who was near his father. Theodosius bad him salute his son. Amphilochus drew near and laying his hand upon him, said, "Save you my child." The emperor in anger ordered the old man to be driven from court; who with a loud voice declared, you cannot bear to have your son contemned; be assured, that God in like manner is offended with those who honor not his Son as himself. The emperor was struck with the justness of the remark, and immediately made a law to prohibit the assemblies of the heretics.

In the same year Gratian fell by murder in the 24th year of his age. Chaste, temperate, benevolent, conscientious, he shines in the church of Christ; but talents for governing he seems not to have possessed. Divine Providence gives in him a lesson that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; even a prince of unquestionable piety is denied the common advantage of a natural death. When dying he bemoaned the absence of Ambrose, and often spake of him. Those, who have received spiritual benefit from a pastor have often an affection for him, of which the world has no knowledge. In his last moments, the mind of Gratian was absorbed in Divine things, compared with which, the loss of empire weighed as nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Heresy of Priscillian—The conduct of Martin—the Progress of Superstition.

VERY little of the spirit of christianity, during this period, is to be found. Evangelical purity had greatly declined. The Priscillianists, an heretical sect, who seem to have combined all the most pernicious heresies of former times, had already appeared in the time of Gratian, and infected the greatest part of Spain. Their leader, Priscillian, was exactly fitted for the office which he filled: learned, factious, acute, of great powers both of body and mind, and by a spurious modesty and gravity of manners, extremely well qualified to maintain an ascendancy over weak and credulous spirits. Idacius and Ithacius, applied to the secular power to procure, by the decrees of the magistrates, an expulsion of the heretics from the cities. The Priscillianists endeavored to gain friends in Italy; but their corruptions were too glaring to procure them any countenance either from Damasus of Rome, or from Ambrose of Milan.

On the death of Gratian, Maximus the usurper, who had rebelled against Gratian, entered victorious into Treves. While Ithacius earnestly pressed him, against the Priscillianists, the heresiarch appealed to Maximus, who undertook the office of deciding. Both parties were highly culpable; the heretics in spreading sentiments entirely subversive of christianity, and their accusers in subserving their own factious and selfish views.

In the mean time, Martin, of Tours, blamed Ithacius for bringing the heretics as criminals before the emperor; and entreated Maximus to abstain from the blood of the unhappy men; he said, it was abundantly sufficient, that they, having been judged heretics by the sentence of the bishops, were expelled from the churches, and that it was a new and unheard evil, for a secular judge to interfere in matters purely ecclesiastical. To punish heretics with death, because they are seen walking in the broad road to eternal destruction, and thus prevent their conversion by shortening their days, is surely contrary to the spirit of HIM, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them! Yet there were men found at this time capable of such enormity, and it marks the degeneracy of the age. But Christ had still a church in the West, and Martin persevered with such zeal in opposing the horrid innovation, and was himself so much respected for his piety and integrity, that he at first prevailed, and the usurper promised not to proceed to blood against the heretics. Afterward, however, he changed his purpose, and Priscillian was put to death, with four other leaders of his sect. A few more were condemned to die, or to be banished. Christianity never received a greater scandal; but the men, who feared God, and loved moderation and charity, wept and prayed in secret, despised and disregarded by the two parties, who trampled on all the rules of godliness. In the mean time worldly passions prevailed in Spain, and though the form of orthodoxy existed, it was evident, that its power was greatly weakened.

Let us here endeavor to find the true church, if we can. We see it in Ambrose, who, coming to Maximus on an embassy from the younger Valentinian, refused to hold communion with his bishops, who had been concerned in the death of the heretics. Maximus, enraged, ordered him to withdraw. Ambrose entered on his journey very readily, having applied in vain to some of the courtiers to furnish him with conveniences. Several holy men who protested against these barbarities, were charged with heresy, and among the rest Martin of Tours. Thus, while there were some in Gaul and Spain, who bore the christian name, to disgrace it with a complication of heresies, and formal orthodoxy, or who dishonored the gospel by a life of avarice, faction and ambition, there were some who feared God and served him in the gospel of his Son.

Martin, in his youth, had, against his will, served in the army under Constantius and Julius. His father, by profession a soldier, had compelled him. At ten years old, he went to the church and gave in his name as a catechumen. At twelve he had a desire to lead a monastic life. But being devoted to military service he avoided its vices, and was liberal to the poor, reserving nothing to himself out of the pay which he received, except what was necessary for daily food.—At 18 he was baptized, and at 20 left the army.—Sometime after, falling into the hands of robbers among the Alps, he was delivered bound to one of them, to be plundered; who leading him to a retired place, asked him, who he was. He answered, "I am a christian." "Are not you afraid?" I never was more at ease, because I know the mercy of the Lord to be most present in trials; I am more concerned for you, who, by your course of life, render yourself unfit to partake of the mercy of Christ. Entering into the arguments of religion, he preached the gospel to the robber. The man believed, attended his instructor to the road, and begged his prayers. The new convert persevered in godliness, and this relation was taken from his account.

It was with difficulty that Martin was at length prevailed on to quit his monastery, and become bishop of Tours, to which office the universal voice of the people called him. He, however, still preserved his monastic taste, and had a monastery two miles out of the city. There, with eighty disciples who followed his example, he lived with extreme austerity. The celebrity of his supposed miracles had a mighty effect on the ignorant Gauls; every common action of his was magnified into a prodigy; heathen temples were destroyed, and churches and monasteries arose in their stead. That Martin was pious, is unquestionable, but, that his piety was disfigured with monastic superstition, is evident. This was not a fault of true religion, but of the times. Europe and Asia, then vied with each other in the promotion of false humility.

CHAPTER XV.

The Conduct of Ambrose, under the Emperor Valentinian, and the persecution which he endured from the emperor's mother, Justina.

JUSTINA, the empress, a decided patroness of Arianism, after the death of her husband, began openly to imbue her son with her doctrine, and to induce him to menace the bishop of Milan. Ambrose exhorted him to support the doctrine received from the apostles.—The young emperor, in a rage, ordered his guards to surround the church, and commanded Ambrose to come out of it. Ambrose resolutely replied, "I shall not willingly give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves. You may use your swords and spears against me; such a death I shall freely undergo." Justina, knowing his influence in the city to be great, and fearing the people, had recourse to vexatious frauds and artifices, and exercised his mind with a series of trials.

The Arians were not the only adversaries of the church. The Gentiles, taking advantage of the minority of Valentinian, and scorning the innovations of christianity, endeavored to recover their ancient establishments, but were foiled in their attempts by the eloquence and influence of Ambrose.

In the year 386 Justina procured a law to be passed to enable the Arian congregations at Milan to assemble without interruption, and an Arian bishop was introduced under her protection into the city. At his request soldiers were sent to procure for himself the possession of the church called Basilica, and tribunes came to demand it, with the plate and vessels belonging to it, and all this under the specious idea that it was unreasonable the emperor should not be allowed to have one place of worship, in the city, agreeable to his conscience. Ambrose calmly answered the officers, that if the emperor had sent to demand his house or land, money or goods, he would have freely resigned them, but that he could not deliver that which was committed to his care. He told his people, he would not willingly desert his right, that if compelled he knew how to resist. "I can," says he, "grieve, I can weep, I can groan. Against arms and soldiers, tears are my arms. Such are the fortifications of a pastor. I neither can nor ought to resist in any other manner. Our Lord Jesus is Almighty; what he commands to be done shall be fulfilled, nor does it become you to resist the Divine sentence."

During the suspension of this affair, Ambrose employed the people in singing Divine hymns and psalms, at the end of which there was a solemn doxology to the honor of the Trinity. The method of responsive singing had been generally practised in the East, and was introduced by Ambrose into Milan, whence it was propagated into all the churches. The people were much delighted, their zeal for the doctrine of the Trinity was inflamed, and one of the best judges in the world, then living, owns that his own soul was melted into Divine affection on these occasions.

The demands of the court were now increased: not only the Portian church which stood without the wall, but also the great church newly built within the city, were required to be given up. On the Lord's day after sermon, the chatechumens being dismissed, Ambrose went to baptize those who were prepared for that ordinance, when he was told that officers were sent from the court to the Portian church; he went on, however, unmoved in the service, till he was told, that the people, having met with Catulus, an Arian presbyter, in the streets, had laid hands on him. Then with prayers and tears he besought God, that no man's blood might be shed but rather his own, not only for the pious people, but also for the wicked. And having sent immediately some presbyters and deacons, Catulus was recovered from the tumult. The court, enraged, sent warrants to apprehend several merchants and tradesmen; some were put in chains, and vast sums of money were required to be paid in a little time, which many professed they would pay cheerfully, if they could enjoy the profession of their faith unmolested. The prisons were by this time full of tradesmen, and the magistrates and men of rank were severely threatened; while the courtiers urged Ambrose with the imperial authority; whom he answered with the same loyalty and firmness as before. The Holy Spirit, said he, in his exhortation to the people, has spoken in you this day, to this effect: EMPEROR, WE INTREAT, BUT WE DO NOT FIGHT. The Arians, having few friends among the people, kept themselves within doors. Wearied and overcome at length with his resolution, the court, who meant to extort his consent, rather than to exercise violence, ordered the guards to leave the church, where Ambrose had lodged all night, the soldiers having guarded it so close, that none had been suffered to go out. The people confined there spent the night in singing psalms. The sums exacted of the tradesmen also were restored.

The spirit of devotion was kept up all this time among the people, and Ambrose was indefatigable both in praying and preaching. But notwithstanding his great piety, and though it is evident that he loved the Lord Jesus Christ supremely, and trusted in him for salvation, yet was he inclined, in some degree, to superstition; for being called upon by the people to consecrate a new church, he told them he would, if he could find any relics of martyrs there. By this he encouraged the introduction of other intercessors beside Jesus Christ, and the growth of superstition.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Church under Theodosius.

AFTER the exaltation of this prince to the empire from a private life by the generous and patriotic choice Gratian, he reigned in the East, more vigorously supporting christianity, according to his ideas of it, than any emperor before him. His sense of justice determined him to order some christians to rebuild, at their own expense, a Jewish synagogue, which they had pulled down. This sentence Ambrose prevailed on him to set aside, from a mistaken notion of piety, that christianity should not be obliged to contribute to the erection of a Jewish synagogue. But, if the Jews were tolerated at all in the empire, the transaction ought certainly to have been looked on as a civil one. This is the first instance I recollect in which a good man was induced, by superstitious motives, to violate the essential rules of justice; and it marks the growth of superstition.

Theodosius was of a passionate temper, and on a particular occasion was led by it to commit a barbarous action; the circumstances of the story will be the best comment on the character of this emperor, of Ambrose, and of the times. At Thessalonica a tumult was made by the populace, and the emperor's officer was murdered. The news was calculated to try the temper of Theodosius, who ordered the sword to be let loose upon them. Ambrose interceded, and the emperor promised to forgive. But the great officers of the court persuaded him to retract, and to sign a warrant for military execution. Seven hundred were put to death in three hours with great cruelty, without trial, and without distinction.

Ambrose wrote him a faithful letter, reminding him of the charge in the prophet, that if the priest does not warn the wicked he shall be answerable for it. "You dicover a zeal," says he, "for the faith and fear of God, I own: but your temper is warm, soon to be appeased indeed, if endeavors are used to calm it; but if not regulated, it bears down all before it." He urges the example of David, and shews the impropriety of communicating with him at present. "I love you," says he "I cherish you, I pray for you; but blame not me, if I give the preference to God." On these principles Ambrose refused to admit Theodosius into the church of Milan. The emperor plead the case of David. "Imitate him," said the zealous Ambrose, "in his repentance as well as in his sin." Theodosius submitted and kept from the church eight months. On the feast of the nativity, he expressed his sorrow with sighs and tears in the presence of Ruffinus the master of the officers. "I weep," said he, "that the temple of God, and consequently heaven, is shut from me, which is open to slaves and beggars." Ruffinus undertook to persuade the emperor. Ambrose urged the impropriety of his rude interference, because Ruffinus, by his evil counsels, had been the author of the massacre. Ruffinus telling him that the emperor was coming, "I will hinder him," says he, "from entering the vestibule; yet if he will play the king, I shall offer my throat." Ruffinus returning, informed the emperor: "I will go and receive the refusal which I desire," said he; and as he approached the bishop, he added, "I come to offer myself to submit to what you prescribe." Ambrose enjoined him to do public penance, and to suspend the execution of capital warrants for thirty days in future, that the ill effects of intemperate anger might be prevented. The emperor, pulling off his imperial robes, prayed prostrate on the pavement; nor did he put on those robes, till the time of his penance had expired. "My soul cleaveth to the dust," said he, "quicken thou me, according to thy word." The people prayed and wept with him, and he not only complied with the rules of penance, but retained visible marks of compunction and sadness during the rest of his life. The discipline thus magnanimously exercised by Ambrose, and humbly submitted to by Theodosius, appears to have been salutary.

At Alexandria the votaries of the renowned temple of Serapis made an insurrection, and murdered a number of christians. The emperor, being informed of this, declared that he would not suffer the glory of their martyrdom to be stained with any executions, and that he was determined to pardon the murderers in hopes of their conversion, but that the temples, the cause of so much mischief, should be destroyed. In one of them was a remarkable image of Serapis, of which it had been confidently given out, that if any man touched it, the earth would open, the heaven be dissolved, and all things run back into a general chaos. A soldier was hardy enough to make the experiment. With an axe he cleft him down the jaws, an army of mice fled out at the breach he made, and Serapis was hacked in pieces. On the destruction of idolatry in Egypt, it happened that the Nile did not overflow so plentifully, as it had been wont to do. "It is," said the pagans, "because it is affronted at the prevailing impiety: it has not been worshipped with sacrifices, as it used to be." Theodosius, being informed of this, declared, like a man who believed in God, and preferred heavenly things to earthly, "We ought to prefer our duty to God, to the streams of the Nile, and the cause of piety to the fertility of the country; let the Nile never flow again, rather than idolatry be encouraged." The event afforded a fine comment on our Savior's words, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." The Nile returned to its course, and rose above the highest mark, which at other times it seldom reached. The pagans made use of ridicule; others, however, made a serious use of the remarkable Providence, and Egypt forsook the superstition, in which for so many ages it had been involved. Thus the country which had nourished idolatry more early and passionately than any others, was made the special scene of the triumphs of God and his Christ.

Coming to Rome the zealous emperor in a deliberate speech endeavored to persuade the senate, very many of whom still patronized idolatry, to embrace the christian faith, as the only religion, which taught men how to obtain pardon of sin, and holiness of life.

The Gentile part of them declared, that they would not give up a religion under which Rome had prospered near twelve hundred years. Theodosius told them, that he saw no reason, why he should maintain their religion, and that he would not only cease to furnish the expense out of the exchequer, but would abolish the sacrifices themselves. The senators complained, that the neglect of the rites was the grand cause, why the empire declined so much: a specious argument, well calculated to gain upon worldly minds, and which, at that time, had great effect on many pagans. Theodosius was determined, and made it a capital crime to sacrifice, or attend the pagan rites; he made it treasonable to offer sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of beasts. He also forbade incense and perfumes. Paganism never after this lifted up its head.

This great prince expired at Milan in 395, about 60 years of age, having reigned 16 years. And the century before us nearly closes with the full establishment of christianity in the Roman empire. The religion which was of God made its way through all opposition; that which was of man, supported only by power and custom, failed to thrive, as soon as it lost the ascendant, and within a generation it ceased almost universally to exist.

Theodosius possessed a noble character. His clemency, liberality and generosity, were admirable.—He was brave and successful in war: but his wars were forced upon him. While an enemy to drunkenness he was a model of gravity, temperance and chastity in private life. Excess of anger was his predominant evil; but he was taught, by having done great evil by yielding to this,the importance of governing his temper and of studying to be humble.

CHAPTER XVII.

The private Life and Works of Ambrose.

THIS illustrious man died about the year 397, admired, regretted, and lamented by the whole christian world. His life not improbably had been shortened by the incessant activity of his mind, and by the multiplicity of his employments; for he was only 57 years old, and had been appointed bishop of Milan at the age of 34.

His spirit was remarkably kind and sympathetic; his benevolence extended to all, especially to the household of faith. His labors were immense. His temper was heroic and strong, and no dignity or authority could shelter offenders from his rebukes, where he deemed it his duty to reprehend. The time he could spare from pastoral and charitable engagements, was devoted to study and meditation.

Though Ambrose was called to teach before he himself had learned, yet was he a man of so much industry in the acquisition of knowledge, and of so much real good sense, that his writings contain various things of solid utility. But he might have both preached and written better, had he always attended to the simple word of God, and exercised his own natural good sense in humble dependance on DIVINE GRACE, and paid less regard to the fanciful writings of Origen, which exceedingly corrupted his understanding. Less of this, however, appears in his moral, than in his theological pieces.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Propagation of the Gospel among Barbarians—Heresies and Errors.

THE Saracens were at war with the Romans, under the conduct of their queen Maovia, who was a christian. The emperor Valens made peace with her, one condition of which was, that Moses, a monk, who lived in the desert between Egypt and Palestine, should be appointed bishop of her nation. Valens ordered him to be carried to Alexandria, there to be ordained by Lucius. Moses, who knew him to be an Arian, said before him and the magistrates, and all the people, stay, I am not worthy to be cálled a bishop; but if I am called to this office, unworthy as I am, for the good of souls, I take the Creator of all things to witness, that I will not receive the imposition of your hands, which are defiled with the blood of so many holy men. If you know not my faith, replied Lucius, learn it from my mouth, and judge not by reports. Moses, however, was aware of the Arian subtilies, and chose to stand by the evidence of works. I know your faith, said he, the pastors exiled among infidels, condemned to the mines, thrown to the wild beasts, or destroyed by fire, testify your creed; the eyes speak more strongly than the ears. Lucius was obliged to dissemble his resentment, on account of the situation of Valens, his master, and permit Moses to receive ordination from the exiled bishops. His labors among the Saracens were crowned with success. The nation before his time, was chiefly idolatrous: that his work was blessed among them appears from his keeping them at peace with the Romans. But this is all the account we have of the fruits.

Among the Goths, some captive bishops, during this century, labored with good success. And the work was of an abiding nature. This people, for some time, held the Nicene faith. In the time of Valens, many of them suffered death from an idolatrous persecuting prince of their own. By the subtilties of the Arians, however, the whole church of the Goths came by degrees into Arianism; the consequences of which will be seen in the course of this history.

Heresies, chiefly through the various ramifications of Arianism, multiplied in this century. Monasticism continued to make rapid progress.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of Chrisitan Authors in this Century,

AMID the thick mists of superstition which greatly abounded in this century, some cheering rays of Divine truth beamed upon the church to guide the truly pious in their way to heaven.

Didymus, of Alexandria, though he lost his sight at the age of five years, became so vigorous and successful a student, that he was renowned for his skill in philosophy, rhetoric, and geometry. He filled the chair of the famous school of Alexandria with vast applause. Though Origenism was his favorite system, yet as far as appears, he continued always sound, humble and holy, in christian doctrine. His treatise on the Holy Spirit, which has come down to us, is perhaps the best, the christian world ever saw on the subject.—Indeed, what has been said, since that time, in defence of the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, seems, in substance, to be found in that book.

Gregory Nyssen, bishop of Nyssa, wrote in defence of the incarnation of God. In this he shews that man is fallen, and corrupted, and can be recovered only by his Creator; and hence, that the Word, who created him came himself to raise him again. He shews also, that to be born of a virgin, to eat, to drink, to die, and to be buried, are things not unbecoming the holy nature of God, because there is no sin in them; and that the Divinity, united to man, lost not its perfections, any more than the soul loses its properties by its union with the body.

Ephraim, the Syrian, was born of christain parents, and was educated with great care from his infancy.—His mind, from childhood, was devout, contemplative and studious, to an extreme degree. Though fond of solitude, he was, at length, induced to live in the great city of Edessa, for the sake of enjoying the benefit of christian assemblies, and of rendering himself useful to his fellow men. He wrote much on the scriptures, and various devotional pieces, which were much admired by all the eastern churches. He never was advanced farther than the office of deacon. Once, to avoid being preferred to the office of bishop, he feigned madness and escaped. In his day, the pastoral character appeared to good men, awful beyond measure, requiring little less than angelical virtue.

Love of gain was not the principal motive, and mere decency of character was not the principal qualification.

Ephraim, strictly sound in the essential requisites of the christian faith, composed christian hymns for the use of the Syrians, which were sung in tunes, that Harmonius, an Arian, had composed with a design to propagate Arianism among them. He wrote also a discourse on the utility of psalmody, and exploded idle songs and dancing. Let this be regarded as a proof of his zeal and industry.

Ephraim appears, by his writings, to have been a man of undoubted piety, and true humility, evangelized both in the head, and heart; not trifling with the light which he had, nor living in sin, because he conceived grace to abound. I shall dismiss this saint, after having given a sketch of the character of Abraham, one of his companions: he, for fifty years, lived an Ascetic, in the strictest observation of monastic rules, and confined himself principally to his cell; but he truly acted like a christian in those intervals when he left it; in one of which, his zeal and piety were greatly distinguished. Many presbyters and deacons had been sent to the idolatrous pagans in the vicinity of his retreat; but being unable to bear persecution had returned unsuccessful. One day the bishop observed among his clergy, that he knew of no person so devoted to God as Abraham, and therefore he would ordain him as an evangelist of these pagans. At first he entreated him, but in vain; Abraham begged to be permitted to bemoan his own evils. The bishop, however, insisting on the obedience which he owed to authority, and how much better it was to be employed in the salvation of many, than of one soul only, Abraham at length submitted. He began his work with fervent prayer for the Divine blessing, and having erected a church, he supplicated in it the conversion of the people. His next step appears not to have been so proper; he threw down the idols and altars of the pagans; the consequence of which was, that, with much ill usage, he was expelled from the country.—He returned, however, and resumed his work of prayer in the church, to the astonishment of the pagans: whom, as they from time to time came to him, he exhorted to turn from idols to the living God, on which he was worse treated than before.—For three years, he bore their insults, and a constant series of persecution. His patience and meekness were admirable, and at length the pagans began to be softened; and comparing his preaching with his practice, they concluded that God must be with him, and offered themselves to receive his doctrine. Abraham, rejoicing at the event, desired them to give glory to God, who had enlightened their eyes to know him. In fine he gathered them into a church, daily opening to them the scriptures. At length, when he saw them confirmed in the faith of the gospel, and bringing forth the fruits of it with steadiness, he abruptly retired from them to his former solitude. The work remained firm and strong; and the bishop visited and exhorted them, from the word of God, and ordained pastors from among themselves.

How much better would it have been had Abraham thus employed the 50 years of his solitude? but such were the times. While the world proceeded in its usual wickedness, those, who were the best calculated to reform it, had a strong tendency to live a recluse life; and false fear and bondage kept many from the pastoral office, who might have been its brightest ornaments. The mischief of this was inexpressible; the extension of the gospel was checked; and every circumstance shewed, that the spirit of God was no longer poured out, in its fullness among men.

Hilary was born at Poictiers in France, was descended from a very noble family, and was distinguished by a liberal education. He seriously considered the folly and vanity of idolatry, and was led to conclude, that its professors could not possibly be competent to lead men to happiness. From the visible frame of things he inferred an Omnipotent, Eternal Being, as their Maker and Preserver. He observed, that happiness consists not in any external things, nor in the bare knowledge of the first principles of good and evil, but in the knowledge of the true God. By reading the books of Moses and the Prophets, he found his mind enlightened and his judgment confirmed in these ideas. The short, but comprehensive account of God, in the book of Exodus, "I am that I am," affected him with admiration. When he was carried forward to the New Testament, there he learnt, that there is an eternal world, the Son of God made man, who came into the world, to communicate to it the fulness of grace. His hope of happiness was now enlarged: "Since the Son of God was made man, men may become the sons of God. A man who with gladness receives this doctrine, renews his spirit by faith, and conceives a hope full of immortality. Having once learned to believe, rejects the captious difficulties, and no longer judges after the maxims of the world. He neither fears death, nor is weary of life ,and presses forward to a state of a blessed immortality." In such a manner docs Hilary give us the history of his own mind in religion.—And his life was afterward according to such principles. His views of the three Persons in the Trinity are remarkably perspicuous and scriptural. In speaking of the Holy Spirit, he says, that he enlightens our understandings, and warms our hearts; that he is the author of all grace, and will be with us to the end of the world; that he is our Comforter here while we live in expectation of a future life, the earnest of our hopes, the light of our minds, and the warmth of our souls.—He directs us to pray for this Holy Spirit, to cause us to do good, and to persevere in faith and obedience. From his conversion till his death, Hilary was a man of the most exemplary piety, and gave no countenance to the fashionable heresies. He died at Poicters about the year 368.

Basil, of Cæsarea flourished, as one of the distinguished characters of this century. He was surnamed the Great on account of his piety and learning.—His christian ancestors suffered much during the Dioclesian persecution. His grandmother Macrina, a confessor of the faith of Christ, and disciple of Gregory Thaumaturgas, was eminently useful to him, in superintending his education, and fixing his principles. After a course of instruction in Cappadocia, his native country, he travelled for improvement in knowledge. It is certain, that he was possessed of all the secular learning of the age, and if he had chosen to give himself wholly to the world, he might have shown as much as superior parts, strong understanding, and indefatigable industry, united, can effect.—But his mind was under a spiritual influence; he found an emptiness in the most refined enjoyments of literature. He was led to seek for food to his soul, and bent his studies to obtain that most desirable object.

In his travels into Egypt, Basil conversed with monks and hermits, and contracted that excessive attachment to the spirit of Ascetics, which afterward made him the great supporter and encourager of those superstitions.

After some time, he lived in retirement at Neocæsarea in Pontus, and by his example, concurring with the spirit of the times, he not only drew over his friend Gregory, but also great numbers, to embrace a retired life, and to employ themselves in prayer, singing of psalms, and devotional exercises. And here, these two friends formed the rules of monastic discipline, which were the basis of all those superstitious institutions, which afterward overran the church. The want of a more evangelical view of doctrine, and of course, of that lively faith which would animate the christian to live above the world, though in the midst of it, was, doubtless the principal cause of the overflowing of this spirit among real good men in those times. To flee from society seemed to them the only possible way to escape the pollutions of the world, which they sincerely abhorred. Self-righteousness and ignorance fomented the evil, which, at length, became a vapid system of formality, and degenerated gradually into a sink of secret wickedness. But he who should, in these times, suspect the generality of monks of hypocrisy and profligacy, would injure them much. On the contrary, the flower of the flock of Christ, is to be looked for among them.

Basil was charitable in his attempts to relieve the poor and caused hospitals to be erected for that purpose.

After he was appointed bishop of Cæsarea, he took a firm and determined stand against the Arian heresy; and though in the utmost danger of banishment, yet he remained immoveable in the profession of the faith.

Discipline in the church of Cæsarea, had, before his time, been scandalously neglected. Church-officers, who were a disgrace to religion, ministered. He set himself to produce a thorough reformation, and took great care to examine the lives and manners of the persons to be ordained. Having governed the church of Cæsarea a little more than eight years, and being enfeebled with bodily disorders, he ordained some of his followers, and then was obliged to take to his bed.

The people flocked about his house, sensible of the worth of such a pastor. He discoursed, for a time, piously to those who were about him, and sealed his last breath with the ejaculation, "Into thine hands I commend my spirit." His excessive austerities broke his constitution, and left him for years in a very imperfect state of health. He died in the year 379.

Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, was not inferior to many in this century for unfeigned purity of faith and manners. It is proper to mention his zeal, in tearing a painted curtain which he saw in a place of public worship, in proof of his detestation of images and pictures in religion, and also of the weak beginnings of that superstition in the fourth century. His beneficence too was truly laudable. Numbers from all parts sent him large sums to distribute to the needy, in confidence of his charity and integrity. His steward one day informed him that his stock was nearly exhausted, and blamed his profuse liberality; but he still continued as liberal as before, till all was gone; when suddenly he received from a stranger a large bag of gold. Another story, extremely well authenticated, deserves to be recorded as an awful warning. Two beggars agreeing to impose on him, one feigned himself dead, while the other begged of Epiphanius to supply the expenses of his companion's funeral. Epiphanius granted the request. The beggar, on the departure of the bishop, desired his companion to rise: but the man was really dead. To sport with the servants of God, and to abuse their kindness, is to provoke God himself, as the bishop told the survivor.

CENTURY V.

CHAPTER I.

John Chrysostom.

THIS renowned man was born at Antioch about the year 354. His father having died soon after his birth, his education devolved upon his mother, who attended to it with great care and diligence. By her means he had the advantage that his early impressions were in favor of christianity. Yet, being naturally studious of eloquence, he devoted himself to the care of that great master, Libanius of Antioch, who being one day asked, who would be capable of succeeding him in his school? "John," said he, if the christians had not stolen him from us." So great was the idea he had formed of his powers of eloquence!

He predicted right. Having pleaded a little time in the Forum, Chrysostom began to find a vacancy in his mind, not to be supplied by secular arts and studies. The spirit of God seems from that time, to have drawn him to the study of the scriptures. By his master Diodorus, who was afterward bishop of Tarsus, he was taught to forsake the popular whims of Origen, and to investigate the literal and historical sense of the Divine word; a practice, in which he differed from most of the fathers of his times.

For some time he lived in monastic austerities; after which Flavian, bishop of Antioch, promoted him to the office of presbyter. About the year 379, a sedition broke out at Antioch, on account of taxes, and the people dragged about the streets the statues of Theodosius, and of his excellent lady Flaccilla, and of their two sons, in contempt. But on finding the danger of the emperor's resentment, this inconsistent and turbulent people were in great distress. Godliness among the christians of that city appears then to have been low. Chrysostom exhorted them to repentance, and made the awful suspense they then were in, an instructive emblem of our expectation of the day of judgment. Hymns and litanies were composed to solicit God to move the heart of the emperor to pity, and many who had never attended the house of God, but had spent their whole time in the theatre, then joined in Divine worship with much earnestness and assiduity. Flavian, the bishop, though aged and infirm, undertook a journey to Constantinople to depricate the wrath of the emperor. Libanius the sophist did the same: but the generality of the philosophers hid themselves in holes and corners, and did nothing for their country in danger; while the monks left their cells, flocked into the city, and entreated the magistrates and judges to behave with lenity. Thus, even monks, who exhibited christianity in a degenerate form, exceeded in benevolence and active virtue the boasted and boasting sons of philosophers!

Chrysostom, while observing the severe proceedings of the courts, and the vain intercessions of relations for husbands and fathers, was led to reflect, how awful the day of judgment will be, when not a mother, sister, or father can arrest the course of Divine justice, or give the least relief to nearest relations, and with much eloquence and pity pressed these considerations on a giddy, unthinking people. Pastors may hence take the hint to improve temporal scenes to the spiritual benefit of their audiences.

The generous and good-natured Theodosius expostulated with Flavian on the unreasonableness and ingratitude of the citizens of Antioch to himself, who had ever been as a parent and benefactor to them.

Flavian, admitting the truth of his observations, and confessing the aggravated guilt of the city, pressed him with the Divine rule, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. And his pathetic and pious admonitions prevailed. Theodosius owned, that if the great Lord of the world, for our sake, became a servant, and prayed for his murderers, it highly became himself to forgive his fellow-servants; and with great tenderness he solicited the bishop to hasten his return, to deliver the citizens from their fears. Flavian returned with the joyful news that the city was fully restored to the emperor's favor. These are some of the triumphs of the gospel. Its mild influence on society, in the suppression of the fights of gladiators and other savage practices, and in the kind and liberal behavior of emperors toward their subjects, even in times when true religion was low, demonstrate, not only, that states do act unwisely, when they venture to reject christianity altogether, and substitute mere ethics in its stead; but also that it is the duty of governors and legislators, as much as in them lies, by positive institutions to promote the knowledge and influence of that Divine religion.

In the year 398, Chrysostom was appointed, by the emperor Arcadius, bishop of Constantinople. On his appointment to this important station, he set himself to reform the clergy, censured their covetousness and luxury, retrenched the expenses of the bishop's table, and applied the surplus to the needy, built a large hospital for the infirm, and put it under the most salutary regulations. Such ministers as refused to reform their lives, he suspended from office, and the widows who were maintained by the church, were admonished to abstain from their gay manner of living, or else to marry. Also he pressed the laity, whose employments filled up the day, to attend Divine worship in the evening. The common people heard Chrysostom gladly, as, for a time at least, they generally will hear, a preacher who speaks to the conscience, though he rebuke them severely, if he manifest in his whole manner, an earnest desire to do them good. The clergy, indolent and corrupt as they were, opposed him vehemently, and watched opportunities against him. The wealthy and the great, offended at his plain reproofs, were as ill-disposed as the clergy. By these things, however, he was not dismayed, but persevered; nor did he confine his cares to Constantinople. To overcome the Arianism of the Goths, he ordained some persons of their country, and assigned them a church within the city, by whose industry he reclaimed many, and he himself often preached there; and prevailed on many of the clergy to do the same. He made liberal and active attempts to spread the gospel among the barbarous nations, though the troubles, which afterwards befel him, must have checked both these and other christian designs. His qualities and labors excited enemies who strove to effect his destruction.

A synod, at length, held and managed by Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, his determined foe, and one of the worst ecclesiastical characters in history, supported by the influence of the proud Eudoxia, the empress, deposed him, and he was condemned, with extreme injustice, to be banished to a port in the Black Sea. No sooner was it known that Chrysostom was gone than the whole city was in an uproar; many blamed the emperor, who, in so weak a manner, had given up the most upright of men to the malice of his wife and of Theophilus. The tumult even became so violent that Eudoxia herself, alarmed at the danger, pressed her husband to recall him, and even wrote to Chrysostom a letter full of protestations of sorrow and respect. Chrysostom was therefore recalled and restored; but the calm was not of long continuance. A silver statue of the empress was solemnly erected in the street just before the great church of St. Sophia. It was dedicated with many heathenish extravagancies, and the people used to meet there in sports and pastimes, to the destraction of the congregation.—Chrysostom, impatient of these things, blamed them from the pulpit, and with great imprudence began his sermon after this manner; "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed, again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger."

The enemies of the bishop could not desire a greater advantage. And they improved it to the utmost. Numbers were ready to gratify the resentment of Eudoxia. And Arcadius, overcome by importunity, ordered again his deposition. He was suspended and confined: his friends and followers were dispersed, rifled, killed, or imprisoned. Edicts were issued, severely threatening all that refused to renounce communion with Chrysostom. It was the season when the chatechumens, who had been instructed, were to receive baptism. The friends of Chrysostom fled into the fields, to keep the festival. The emperor himself went out that day into a meadow adjoining the city, and espied a field covered with white. These were the chatechumens, who had been baptized the night before, and had then their white garments upon them, being near 3000 in number. The emperor, having been told they were a conventicle of heretics, ordered a party of soldiers to disperse them. Several women of quality were very rudely treated on this occasion, and numbers were imprisoned and scourged. Receiving at length a warrant signed by the emperor to depart, Chrysostom exhorted the deaconesses to continue their care of the church, and to communicate with the bishop, who should be chosen by common consent, in his room, and once more retired, in the year 404.

To Arsacius, the bishop appointed in his stead, the friends of Chrysostom refused to submit. They formed separate assemblies, and were severely persecuted. Among these was Olympias, an opulent lady, who had honored him abundantly, and had profitted much by his ministry. She had acted in the church as a deaconess, and was now banished to Nicomedia, whence she supplied the exiled Chrysostom with money. There she lived many years an example of piety. Her beloved pastor was conveyed to Caucusus, a cold, barren region, infested with robbers. There he preached frequently to a people, who generously treated and heard him gladly. In a time of grievous famine, which afflicted those parts, by the liberality of Olympias, he relieved the poor; and also redeemed many captives from the Isaurian robbers.

In the third year of his banishment, the sufferings of Chrysostom, from famine, pestilence and war, were great. His enemies, beholding him every where treated with respect, procured an order for his being removed even to the shore of the Black Sea. This order they set themselves to accomplish, but this faithful servant of Christ became so exhausted, that, before they had proceeded on their way four miles, he was extremely ill, and they were obliged to return with him. There, having received the Lord's supper, he made his last prayer before them all; and having concluded with his usual doxology, "glory be to God for all events," he breathed out his soul in the 53d year of his age, in the year 407, of the christian era.

Behold, the Roman empire become christian; idolatry, with all the rites of heathenism, subjected to legal penalties; the profession of the gospel exceedingly honorable; and the externals of religion supported by the munificence of emperors, and by the fashion of the age, even with excessive sumptuousness! And ask, why it was that the learned Chrysostom, eloquent beyond measure, of talents the most popular, of a genius the most exuberant, and of understanding the most solid and profound, magnanimous and generous in his disposition, of great liberality, sympathising with distress of every kind; of temper frank, open, ingenuous, and remarkably conciliatory, yet why was he persecuted with relentless hostility? The answer is at hand. He was a determined enemy of vice, and his exemplary piety and bold and pungent condemnation of iniquity, excited the hatred of the carnal mind.

CHAPTER II.

Augustine's Confessions abridged.

FROM the latter end of the third century to the former part of the fifth, we have seen a gradual declension of godliness; and when we view, in the West, the increase of monastic darkness and superstition; in the East, the same evils to a still greater degree, attended with such an augmentation of iniquity, that even where all the formalities of godliness are preserved, the power of it is hated and persecuted in the same manner as by pagans; in fine, when the vestiges of christian truth are scarce discernible, we shall not be far amiss in pronouncing, that, in such a state of religion, the wholesome effects of the first effusion of the spirit of God are brought to a close.

It is evident, that real christianity, notwithstanding its nominal increase under christian emperors, must soon have been extinct, if God had not interposed with a second great effusion of his spirit. He did so in the course of the fifth century, and the church arose again from its ruins in one part at least of the empire.*

It behoves us to attend to this gracious display of divine goodness; and for this purpose, we must look back into the last century, to trace the secret springs of this dispensation. They particularly involve the private life of Augustine, bishop of Hippo. He was the great instrument of reviving the knowledge of evangelical truth. By a very remarkable work of divine grace on his own soul, he was qualified to contend with the growing corruptions. It is a happy circumstance, that we have, in his confessions, a large and distinct account of his own conversion.—And who could relate it like himself? I proceed to give an account of these confessions:—the propriety and importance of so long a detail will afterwards appear.†

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*The western, as will appear in the course of the narrative.

†The life of this great man was written by Possidius, sometimes called Possidonius, a pious presbyter of his diocese, afterwards bishop of Calama. Though poorly written, yet it deserves to be mentioned, as it confirms the authenticity of the historical parts of the Confessions. Augustine was born in the city of Tagasta, in Numidia, of creditable parents. His father, Patricius, continued a pagan till near his death; his mother, Monica, was renowned for christian piety. At the time of his full conversion to the gospel he was upwards of thirty years of age. Possid. Life of August.

BOOK I.

THOU art great, O Lord, and most worthy to be praised; great is thy power, and of thy wisdom there is no end. A man, a portion of thy creation, wishes to praise thee, a man too, carrying about him his mortality, carrying about him the evidences of his sin, and a testimony, that thou resistest the proud; yet, even such a man wishes to praise thee. Thou excitest him, that he should delight to praise thee. For thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless, till it rest in thee.

Who shall give me to rest in thee? who shall give me, that thou mayest come into my heart, and inebriate it, that I may forget my own evils, and embrace thee, my only good? What art thou to me? Pity me, that I may speak. What am I to thee, that thou shouldest command me to love thee, and be angry at me, if I do not, and threaten me with the greatest miseries? Is that itself a small misery, to be destitute of the love of thee? Alas! alas! tell me by thy compassion, O Lord my God, what thou art to me? SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. So speak, that I may hear. Behold! the ears of my heart are before thee, O Lord; open them, and SAY UNTO MY SOUL, I AM THY SALVATION. May I run after this voice, and apprehend thee. HIDE NOT THY FACE FROM ME. May I die,* that I may see it, lest I die indeed. The room of my soul is narrow, too narrow for thy entrance. Oh! do thou enlarge it. It is ruinous: O do thou repair it. It has what must offend thine eyes, I know and must confess. But who shall cleanse it? or to whom shall I cry but to thee? CLEANSE ME FROM MY SECRET FAULTS, AND KEEP ME FROM PRESUMPTUOUS SINS. I BELIEVE, AND THEREFORE SPEAK. O Lord, thou knowest. Have not I confessed to thee my sins, and hast not thou pardoned the iniquity of my heart? I will not contend in judgment with thee, who art truth itself; for I would not deceive myself, lest my iniquity lie against itself. I will not contend in judgment with thee, for if thou, Lord, should mark iniquities, who can stand ?*

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*He seems to wish to undergo any mortification, even loss of life itself, rather than loose the enjoyment of his God.

But do thou suffer me to speak before thy mercy; me, who am dust and ashes. Suffer me to speak, because I address thy mercy, and not the scornfulness of proud men. Perhaps thou deridest the simplicity of my thoughts, yet wilt thou turn and exercise compassion upon me. What else would I say, O Lord, my God, than that I know not whence I came hither into this,—shall I call it mortal life, or vital death ? Thy compassionate consolations however received me, and and thou gavest me the aliment of infancy.

Hear me, O God. Woe to the sins of men! And a man says these things, and thou pitiest him, because thou hast made him, and madest not sin in him. Who shall inform me of the sin of my infancy ? For none is clear from sin in thy sight, not even the infant, whose life is one day. Could it be a good thing, with tears to beg, what it would be noxious to receive, to express vehement indignation against my elders and betters, if they did not comply with my will, and to endeavor, though with feeble blows, to revenge myself of them? The imbecility of my infant-limbs was innocent, not so the spirit of the infant. I have seen and observed an infant full of envy, who could not yet speak: pale with anger he looked at his fellow-suckling with bitterness in his countenance. But as I was conceived in iniquity, and my mother nourished me in her womb in sin, where, Lord, where, or when was I innocent ? But I pass by this whole time. For, what can I say of that, no traces of which I recollect ?†

What miseries, Lord, did I experience, when I was directed, in the plan of my education, to obey my teachers, in order to the acquisition of that knowledge, which might be subservient to the attainment of false riches and honor? Yet, I sinned; O Lord, who ordainest all things, except our sins; I sinned in rebelling against the orders of parents and masters. That literature, which they wished me to acquire, with whatever intention, was yet capable of being applied to a good use. My disobedience arose, not from the love of better things, but from the love of play and a fondness for games and shows. Behold, Lord, these things with an eye of mercy, and deliver us who now call on thee; deliver also those, who do not call on thee as yet, that they may call on thee, and experience thy deliverance.

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* It is obvious to observe, how a mind like Augustine's, altogether resting on grace, and free justification, is freed from the solicitude of self-vindication in any part of his conduct: whereas, those who rest for salvation, in any degree, on themselves, are ever tempted to extenuate their sins.

† The serious reader will not be inclined to pass over, in levity, these striking proofs of the sinful propensity of nature exerting itself, antecedent to the growth of reason or the power of habit.

I had heard from childhood of the eternal life promised unto us through the humility of the Lord our God, condescending to our pride. Thou sawest, when I was yet a boy, and seemed to be on the brink of death, through a sudden and violent pain of the stomach, with what eagerness I begged christian baptism from the charity of my mother and of the church. My mother, who travelled in birth for my eternal salvation, herself possessed of very lively faith and hope in thee, was hastening to comply with my desires, that I might wash away my sins, confessing thee, O Lord Jesus, when I was suddenly recovered to health. A relapse into presumptuous sin, after baptism, being judged more dangerous, and the prospect of life admitting too great a probability of such relapse, my baptism was deferred. Thus did I at that time believe in Christ, my father being the only infidel in our family. My mother was sedulous, that thou shouldest be my Father, rather than he, and in this she was favored with thy help: obedient as she was to her husband by thy command, in this point she prevailed over him. Was the delay of my baptism for my benefit? What is the cause, that we hear every where such sounds as these, LET HIM DO WHAT HE WILL, HE IS NOT YET BAPTIZED. How much better for me, had I been, in more early life, initiated into the fold of Christ?*

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* The narrative, before us may justly be called a history of the usual operations of the Spirit of God on his people. Convictions in early life, on remarka-

Yet, in childhood itself, though little dreaded by my mother, in comparison of the dangers of youth, I was indolent, and improved in learning only through necessity. A false secular ambition was the only motive laid before me by my teachers; but thou, who numberest the hairs of our heads, improvedst their error to my advantage, whilst thou justly punishedst the great sins of so young an offender by their corrections. The learning, which with no holy intention they taught me, was sanctified by thee, and my guilty laziness was scourged. So hast thou ordained, that a mind disordered by sin, should be its own punishment.

But why I hated Greek literature, in which I was instructed when very young, I do not even yet sufficiently understand. For I was fond of Latin learning, not indeed the first rudiments, but those things which classical masters teach. To read, and write, and learn arithmetic, would have been as severe drudgery to my spirit, as all the Greek literature. I lay this also to the account of my native depravity, which prefers the worse, and rejects the better. The uses of reading, writing, and arithmetic are obvious; not so, the study of the wanderings of Æneas, which I attended to, while I forgat my own:—and of what use was it to deplore the self-murdering Dido? while yet I could bear unmoved the death of my own soul alienated from thee in these pursuits,—from thee, my God, my life. O thou light of my heart, and bread of my inward man, and true husband of my soul, I loved thee not, I committed fornication against thee, and (such the spirit of the world) I was applauded with "well done" on all sides, and I should have been ashamed to have been found otherwise disposed. Yet the friendship of the world is fornication against thee. This is the kind of literature, which has arrogated to itself the name of polite and liberal. Learning of re-

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ble occasions, are common among these, and usually wear away, as in the case of Augustine. The examples of Constantine and Constantius deferring their baptism seem to have made the practice fashionable, not from any idea of the unlawfulness of infant baptism, but from the selfish and pernicious notions, which he has stated. No wonder, that he, who justly thought that his own soul had suffered much by the delay, was afterwards a strenuous asserter of the expediency of more early baptism.

al utility is looked on as low and vulgar. Thus, in my childhood did I sin by a vicious preference. Two and two make four, was to me an odious sing-song; but the wooden horse, the burning of Troy, and the ghost of Creusa, were most enchanting spectacles of vanity. Yet why did I hate Greek literature, when employed on the same sort of objects? Homer is most agreeably trifling; to me, however, when a boy, he was by no means agreeable. I suppose Virgil would be the same to Grecian youths, on account of the difficulties of learning a foreign language. Discipline is needful to overcome our puerile sloth, and this also is a part of thy government of thy creatures, O God, for the purpose of restraining our sinful impetuosity.—From the ferulas of masters to the trials of martyrs thy wholesome severities may be traced, which tend to recal us to thee from that pernicious voluptuousness, by which we departed from thee.

Hear, O Lord, my prayer, let not my soul faint under thy discipline, and let me not faint in confessing to thee thy mercies, by which thou hast delivered me from all my own evil ways, that thou mayest endear thyself to me, above all the blandishments, which I was following, and that I may love thee most ardently, and embrace thy hand with all my heart, that thou mayest free me from all temptation even to the end. For lo! my King and my God, may whatever useful thing I learnt when a boy, serve thee, may what I speak and read and number, serve thee, because while I was learning vain things, thou gavest me thy discipline, and in those vain things forgavest the sins of my delights. For in them I learnt many useful words, though they might have been learned, abstracted from this connexion with vanity.

Alas! the torrent of human custom! who shall resist thee? How long will it be, ere thou be dried up: how long wilt thou roll the sons of Eve into a great and tempestuous sea, which even they, who have fled for refuge to the cross can scarce escape? Have not I read in thee of Jove, at once the thunderer and the adulterer? What is this, but to teach men to call their crimes no crimes, while they have the sanction of gods, whom they imitate? Terence introduces a profligate young man justifying his lewdness by the example of Jove, while he beholds a picture on the wall of Jupiter and Danae,* and excites himself to lust, as by divine tuition. SHALL HE DO THESE THINGS, WHO SHAKES HEAVEN WITH HIS THUNDER? AND MAY NOT I, A POOR MORTAL, DO THE SAME? Yet I, my God, now indulged by thy grace, to behold thee in peace, learnt these things with pleasure, was delighted with them, and was called a boy of promising genius. The motives of praise and disgrace then spurred on my restless heart to literary exertions. What acclamations were made to a puerile exercise of mine on a particular occasion! Were not all these things smoke and wind? Was there not another way of exercising my talents,—in celebrating thy praise? But, what wonder, that I departed from thee, my God, when men were proposed to me as objects of imitation, who would blush to be detected in a barbarism or solecism, in reciting their own actions though innocent, and at the same time might recite the story of their own lewdness, not only with impunity, but even with commendation, provided they did so with a copious and elegant flow of diction? O thou God of long suffering, who permittest men thus to affront thee! Wilt thou not deliver, from this horrible pit, the soul that seeks thee, that thirsts after thy delights, and says, THY FACE, LORD, WILL I SEEK? It was by the darkness of libidinous affection, that the younger son† went to a great distance from thee, a gracious Father in bestowing on him thy gifts; and still more gracious to him, when returning in indigence. How studiously exact are men in observing the rules of letters and of syllables, while they neglect the rules of eternal salvation! Thou dwellest on high in inaccessible light, and scatterest penal blindness on unbridled lusts. A man shall seek the fame of eloquence, while, before the crowded audience, he guards against the least false pronunciation, and guards not at all against the fiercest malevolence of his own heart raging against his fellow creatures.

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* Terence an Eunuch.

† Luke xv.

In this school did I wretchedly live. To please men was then to me the height of virtue, whilst I saw not the whirlpool of baseness, in which I was cast from thine eyes. For what more filthy than I, all this time, deceiving by innumerable falshoods both masters and parents through the love of play, and amusements? I even robbed the storehouses of my parents, either from the spirit of gluttony, or to bestow things agreeable to my play-fellows. In my plays, I often sought to obtain fraudulent victories, overcome by the desire of vain excellence. Yet, what should I dread so much to suffer, or be so ready to accuse in another, if detected, as that very thing, which I did to others; in which, however, if I myself was detected, I was more disposed to rage than to submit? Is this puerile innocence? far from it, O Lord. Change the scene only from pedagogues and masters, from nuts and balls, and sparrows, to prefects, kings, gold, and estates, and you see the vices of men, just as heavier punishments succeed to ferulas.

Still, O Lord, in my childhood, I have much to praise thee for. Many, many were thy gifts; the sin was mine, that I sought pleasure, truth, and happiness, not in thee, but in the creatures, and thence rushed into pains, confusions, and errors. I thank thee, O my Delight and Confidence, for thy gifts; but do thou preserve them for me, and the things which thou hast given me shall be increased and perfected, and I shall be with thee, because thou hast given me to be so*.

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* It is a very unjust surmise of Mr. Gibbon, to infer from Augustine's unwillingness to learn Greek, that he never attained the knowledge of that language; when he tells us, that he was doubtless a person of uncommon quickness of parts. His sloth and other vicious practices in childhood were, I suppose, such as are common to children. But few are disposed to look on them as serious evils. To Augustine's mind they appeared what they were, the marks of an apostate nature. Though, since the destruction of pagan idolatry, there is by no means the same danger of reading classic authors, yet how justly blamable is the practice of leading boys so much to lewd poets, instead of acquainting them with the more solid excellencies of many prose authors!—A just selection of the most innocent and useful authors, and an insidious comparison of their sentiments with those of christianity all along, will not only guard against the poison of the classics, but instruct youth in the necessity and importance of revelation; and school-masters, as well as children, may learn, in what we have seen, just matter of rebuke for exalting literary above moral excellence.

BOOK II.

I AM willing to record the scene of baseness and carnal corruption, which I passed through in my youth, not that I may love them, but that I may love thee, my God. I do it with the love of thy love, recollecting my own very evil ways in the bitterness of memory, that thou mayest be endeared to me, O Delight that never deceives, Delight happy and secure, thou which collectest and bindest together the dispersed parts of my broken soul: while averse from thee, the only God, I vanished into variety of vanities![†] For I was inflamed in my youth to be satiated with infernal fires, and became as rottenness in thy sight, while I pleased myself, and desired to please the eyes of men.

Love was my object; but, by the excess of passion, the serenity of affection was lost in the darkness of lust. My weak age was hurried along through the whirlpool of flagitiousness. Thy displeasure was all the time embittering my soul, and I knew it not. The noise of my carnal chains, and the punishment of my pride rendered me deaf to thy voice; I went far from thee; thou sufferedst it: I was tossed and agitated, and I overflowed with the ebullitions of lewdness, and thou wast silent, O my too tardy joy! At that time thou wast silent, and I wandered deeply from thee among the barren seeds of woes, in a state of proud degradation, and restless weariness. Thy Omnipotence is not far from us, even when we are very far from thee; I might have heard thy voice, recommending a single life devoted to God, allowing indeed matrimony, and frowning on lewdness.[*] But I burst all legal bonds, yet escaped not thy scourges;—who of mortals can? For thou wast always present, severely merciful, mixing all my unlawful delights with bitter alloys, that I might seek for pleasure without alloy or obstacle, and not be able to find the possibility of this, but in thee, thee I say, O Lord, who connectest pain with the breach of thy laws, and smitest that thou mayest heal, and slayest us, that we may not die from thee. Where was I, and how long did I live in exile from thy house, in that sixteenth year of my age, when the madness of lust seized me altogether, and I willingly suffered the reins to be struck out of my hands? To the disgrace of our nature, this species of lust is every where tolerated, though forbidden by thy laws.† My friends took no pains to bridle me by the wholesome restraint of marriage; their anxiety was, that I should acquire the arts and graces of eloquence.

[†] The beautiful thought, thus diffusively expressed in our author's usual manner, is happily painted in a single word by the Psalmist, UNITE my heart to fear thy name. Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

[*] 1 Cor. vii.

That year I had vacation from my studies, being returned from Madaura, a neighboring city, where I had begun to learn oratory, at my father's house at Tagasta. He, with a spirit above his circumstances, for he was but a poor freeman of the town just mentioned, determined to send me to Carthage, that I might have the greatest advantages for proficiency. Why do I relate these things before thee, my God, to my fellow creatures, the few of them, who may read these lines? That both I and they may consider, out of how great a depth it behoves us to cry to thee. And what is nearer than thine ears, if the heart confide in thee, and the life flow from faith? Who did not then extol the noble spirit of my father, laying out so much money on the education of his son; a spirit, so much superior to that of many much richer citizens, who had not the heart to send their sons to Carthage? While yet he had no concern in what manner I grew up to thee. Whether I was chaste or not, cost him no thought, provided I was eloquent. In this year of vacation my passions were rampant without controul. This pleased my father, who, intoxicated with liquor, expressed his pleasure on the occasion to my mother. She had lately begun to feel thy holy love, and had been washed in the laver of regeneration. He was a catechumen in profession. Instantly, she conceived a pious trepidation on my account. My God, thou spakest to me by her, and warnedst me strongly against the ways of vice. Thy voice in her I despised, and thought it to be only the voice of a woman, which made not the least impression on my mind. So blinded was I, that I should have blushed to be thought less wicked than my companions, and even invented false stories of my sinful exploits, to obtain their commendation. My pious parent was prevented from encouraging me to marry, because she thought the usual studies, which I was now to enter upon, might be serviceable to promote in me the work of true religion. My father thought little of thee, much of his son, in vain expectations. Thus while they both were too anxious for my literarary improvements, I made progress in vice, and shut myself up in the darkness of sin,so as to bar up, against myself, the admission of thy truth as much as possible.

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† Would to God, that this were not the case in the christian countries, as well as pagan! If the reader feel himself inclined to treat with levity the serious manner in which juvenile vices are treated by the author, he will, when better informed of the malignity of sin, condemn his own taste, not that of Augustine. The same contrast may be extended to the case of his theft which follows.

Thy law certainly punishes theft, O Lord, and so does the *law* written* in the hearts of men. For what thief can bear another? Yet compelled by no want, I deliberately committed theft; through the wantonness of iniquity and the contempt of justice. It was not the effect of the theft, but the sin itself which I wished to enjoy. There was a pair-tree in the neighborhood of my father's vineyard, loaded with fruit, though not of the most tempting kind. At dead of night, in company with some profligate youths, I plundered the tree; the spoil was principally thrown to the hogs; for I had abundance of better fruit at home. Behold my heart, my God, behold my heart, which thou hast pitied in its deep abyss of sin. What did I mean, that I should be gratuitously wicked? I loved destruction itself. In the common course of wickedness men have some end in view. Even Cataline himself loved not his crimes, but something else, for the sake of which he perpetrated them. We are deceived by appearances of good, embracing the shadows, while we follow our own lusts, instead of seeking the substance, which is only in thee. Thus the soul commits fornication, when it is turned from thee, and seeks out of thee, that pleasure, honour, power, wealth, or wisdom, which it never will find in its genuine purity, till it return to thee. All, who remove themselves far from thee, and set up themselves in opposition, perversely imitate some attribute of God; though even by such imitation they own thee to be the Creator of the universe. This is the general nature of sin. It deceives by some fictitious shadow of that good, which in God alone is to be found. But what vicious or perverse imitation of my Lord, was there in my theft? I can conceive none, unless it be the pleasure of acting arbitrarily and with impunity against law; a dark similitude of Omnipotence. O rottenness! O monster of life, and profundity of death! Could I delight in what was not lawful, merely on that account, because it was not lawful? What reward shall I give to the Lord, that I can now recollect these things without fear of damnation? will I love and bless thee, Lord, because thou hast pardoned such horrible evils. I impute it to thy grace that thou hast melted my sins as ice is melted. I impute also to thy grace my exemption from those evils, which I have not committed. For of what was I not capable, who loved even gratuitous wickedness? I am sensible, that all is forgiven, not only the evils which I have actually committed, but also those evils which by thy guidance I have been kept from committing. He who, called by thee, hath avoided the evils which he hears me confessing, should not deride me a poor patient healed by the physician, since he himself is indebted to the same Benefactor for his health, or to speak more properly, for his being afflicted with a less degree of sickness.

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* He means the voice of natural conscience. See Rom. ii. 15.

O the unsearchable seduction of pernicious friendship, the avidity of doing mischief from sport, the pleasure of making others suffer, and this without any distinct workings either of avarice or of revenge! Let us go, let us do it, and we are ashamed to appear defective in impudence. Who can unfold to me the intricacies of this knot of wickedness? It is filthy, I will pry no more into it, I will not see it. Thee will I chuse, O righteousness and innocence, light honorable indeed, and satiety insatiable! With thee is perfect rest, and life without perturbation. He who enters into thee, enters into the joy of his Lord, and shall not fear, and shall be in the best situation in thee, the best. I departed from thee, and erred, my God, too devious from thy stability in youth, and became to myself a region of desolation.

BOOK III.

I CAME to Carthage surrounded by flagitious lusts. After thee, O my God, the true bread of life, I hungered not; and though famished with real indigence, and longing after that which satisfieth not, I had no desire for incorruptible aliment, not because I was full of it; for the more empty I was, the more fastidious I grew. My mind was sickly; having no resources within, she threw herself out of herself to be carried away by intemperate appetite. My sordid passions, however, were gilded over with the decent and plausible appearances of love and friendship. Foul and base as I was, I affected the reputation of liberal and polite humanity. I rushed into the lusts with which I desired to be captivated. My God, my mercy, with how great bitterness, and yet how kindly, didst thou mix that sweetness, by which I was miserably enslaved and beaten with all the iron rods of envy, suspicion, fear, indignation, and quarrelling. The spectacles of the theatre now hurried me away, full of the images of my miseries, and fomentations of my fire.

The arts of the Forum now engaged my ambition; the more fraudulent, the more laudable. Pride and arrogance now elated my soul, though I was far from approving the frantic proceedings of the men called EVERSORES, who made a practice of disturbing modest pleaders, and confounding their minds by riots.—

Amidst these things, in that imbecility of judgment which attends youth, I studied the books of eloquence with the most ardent desire of vain glory, and in the course of my reading dipped into the Hortensius of Cicero, which contains an exhortation to the study of philosophy. This book was the instrument of effecting a remarkable change in my views. I suddenly gave up the fantastic hope of reputation by eloquence, and felt a most ardent thirst after wisdom. In the mean time I was maintained at Carthage at my mother's expense, being in the nineteenth year of my age, my father being dead two years before. How did I long, my God, to fly from earthly things to thee, and I knew not what thou wert doing with me. And at that time, O light of my heart, thou knowest, though I was unacquainted with the apostolical admotion, TAKE HEED, LEST ANY MAN SPOIL YOU THROUGH PHILOSOPHY AND VAIN DECEIT;[*] that this was the sole object of my delight in the Ciceronian volume, that I was vehemently excited by it to seek for wisdom, not in this or that sect, but wherever it was to be found.—And the only thing which damped my zeal was, that the name of Christ was not there, that precious name, which from my mother's milk I had learned to reverence. And, whatever was without this name, however just, and learned, and polite, could not wholly carry away my heart. I determined, therefore, to apply my mind to the holy scriptures to see what they were; and now I see the whole subject was impenetrable to the proud, low in appearance, sublime in substance, and veiled with mysteries; and my frame of heart was such as to exclude me from it, nor could I stoop to take its yoke upon me. I had not these sensations when I attended to the scriptures, but they appeared to me unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Cicero. My pride was disgusted with their manner, and my penetration could not enter into their meaning.[†] It is true, those, who are content to be little children, find by degrees an illumination of their souls, but I disdained to be a child, and, elated with pride, imagined myself to be possessed of manly wisdom.

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[*] Coloss, ii.

[†] An excellent description of the usual effect of a little scriptural study on a proud mind, which, by the just judgment of God, is given up to judicial infatuation and specious delusion in some way or other.

In this situation I fell in with the Manichees, men, who had in their mouths the mere sound of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and were always talking of THE TRUTH, THE TRUTH, and yet formed the most absurd opinions of the works of nature, on which subjects the heathen philosophers far excelled them. O truth, how eagerly did I pant after thee, which they repeated continually with their mouths, and in many huge volumes! But they taught me to look for my God in the Sun and Moon, and also in a number of splendid phantasies of their own creation.† I endeavored to feed on these vanities, but they being not my God though I supposed so, I was not nourished, but exhausted. How far did I wander then from thee, excluded even FROM THE HUSKS WHICH THE SWINE DID EAT! For, the fables of the poets, which I did not believe, though I was entertained with them, were preferable to the absurdities of these lovers of truth. Alas! alas! by what steps was I led to the depths of hell!—Panting after truth, I sought thee, my God, not in intellectual, but in carnal speculation; but I confess to thee, who didst compassionate my misery, even while I was hardened against thee. The Manichees seduced me, partly with their subtile and captious questions concerning the origin of evil, partly with their blasphemies against the Old Testament saints.* I did not then understand, that, though the divine rule of right and wrong be immutable in the abstract, and the love of God and our neighbor be ever indispensably necessary, yet that there were particular acts of duty adapted to the times and seasons and circumstances in which they were placed, which, abstracted from such considerations, would be unlawful. In much ignorance I, at that time, derided thy holy servants, and was justly exposed to believe most ridiculous absurdities. And thou sentest thy hand from above, and freedst me from this depth of evil, while my mother prayed for me, more solicitous on account of the death of my soul, than other parents for the death of the body. She was favored with a dream, by which thou comfortest her soul with hope of my recovery.—She saw herself standing on A WOODEN RULE, and a person coming to her, who asked her the cause of her affliction, and on being answered, that it was on my account, he charged her to be confident, that where she was, there also I should be. On which she beheld me standing by her on the same wooden rule.—Whence was this but from thee, gracious Omnipotent! who takest care of each and all of us, as of single persons? When she related this to me, I endeavored to evade the force of it, by observing that it might mean to exhort her to be what I was; without hesitation she replied, it was not said, where he is, there thou shalt be, but where thou art, there he shall be. Her prompt answer made a stronger impression on my mind than the dream itself. For nine years, while I was rolling in the slime of sin, often attempting to rise, and still sinking deeper, did she in vigorous hope persist in incessant prayer. I remember also, that she intreated a certain bishop to undertake to reason me out of my errors. He was a person not backward to attempt this where he found a docile subject. "But your son," says he, "is too much elated at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelty of his error, to regard any arguments, as appears by the pleasure he takes in puzzling many ignorant persons with his captious questions. Let him alone; only continue praying to the Lord for him; he will, in the course of his study, discover his error. I myself, perverted by my mother, was once a Manichee, and read almost all their books, and yet at length was convinced of my error, without the help of any disputant." All this satisfied not my anxious parent; with floods of tears she persisted in her request, when at last he, a little out of temper on account of her importunity, said, "Be gone, good woman; it is not possible, that a child of such tears should perish." She has often told me since, that this answer impressed her mind like a voice from heaven.

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† The Manichees, so called from Manes their founder, had existed about an hundred years. It would not be worth while to notice them at all, were it not for their connexion with the life of Augustine. Like most of the ancient heretics, they abounded in senseless whims not worthy of any solicitious explanation. This they had in common with the pagan philosophers, that they supposed the Supreme Being to be material, and to penetrate all nature. Their grand peculiarity was to admit of two independent principles, a good and evil one, in order to solve the arduous question concerning the origin of evil. Like all heretics, they made a great parade of seeking truth with liberal impartiality, and were thus qualified to deceive unwary spirits, who, suspecting their own imbecility of judgment the last thing in the world, and regardless of the word of God and hearty prayer, have no idea of attaining religious knowledge by any other method than by natural reason.

*The Manichees objected to the characters of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, &c. on account of various actions allowed under the dispensation of their times, but forbidden under the New-Testament, and thence formed an argument against the divinity of the Old Testament.

BOOK IV.

For the space of nine years, from the nineteenth to the twenty-eigth year of my age, I lived deceived and deceiving others, seducing men into various lusts, openly, by what are called the liberal arts, and secretly, by a false religion; in the former, proud, in the latter, superstitious, in all things, seeking vain glory, even to theatrical applauses and contentious contests; and, to complete the dismal picture, a slave to the lusts of the flesh. So infatuated was I with the Manichean follies, that I drew my friends into them, and with them practised the impieties of the sect. The arrogant may despise me, and all who have never felt a salutary work of self-humiliation from thee, my God. But I would confess to thee my own disgraces for thy glory. What am I, left to myself, but a guide rashly conducting others down a precipice? and when I am in a better state, what am I but an infant sucking thy milk, and enjoying thee, the bread that perisheth not? and what is any man, since he is flesh? Let the proud and strong despise us; but we, weak and poor, would confess to thee.

At this time I maintained myself by teaching rhetoric; and without fraud I taught my scholars, not how to oppress the innocent, but sometimes how to vindicate the guilty. I lived also with one woman, but without matrimony. At this time I ceased not also to consult astrologers, nor could I be induced by the arguments of a very sensible physician, nor by the admonitions of my excellent friend Nebridius, to reject these follies.

While I was teaching rhetoric in this manner in my native town, I enjoyed the friendship of a young man of my own age, a school-fellow and companion from infancy. Indeed there is no true friendship, except thou cement it among those who cleave to thee, through the love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. But it was a friendship too sweet, inflamed by the fervor of similar studies. For I had drawn him aside from the true faith, which he held not in a deep and genuine manner, into the Manichean follies, on account of which my mother bewailed me. And lo! thou who pursuest thy fugitives, O God of vengeance and source of mercies, and convertest us to thyself by wonderful methods, lo! thou removedst him from this life, when I had scarce enjoyed his friendship a year, after my return to Tagasta. While he lay a long time senseless in a fever, and his life was despaired of, he was baptized without his own knowledge, a thing which I regarded with great indifference, as not doubting but he would retain my instructions which had been instilled into his mind rather than that which had been applied to his body, when he was ignorant of the matter. However, against all expectation, he recovered. As soon as I had an opportunity of conversing with him, I attempted to turn into ridicule his late baptism, in which I expected his concurrence. But he dreaded me as an enemy, and with wonderful freedom suddenly admonished me, that if I would be his friend, I should drop the subject. Confounded at this unexpected behavior, I deferred the conversation, till he should be thoroughly recovered. But he was removed from my madness, that he might be saved with thee to my consolation; after a few days the fever returned and he died. How miserable was my life! my country was a punishment, my father's house a wonderful infelicity, and whatever

I had enjoyed in common with him, without him was torment itself. I found I could now no longer say, He will come shortly, as I was wont to do. If I said, hope in God, my soul refused; for the man whom I had lost was an object preferable to the phantasm,* on which I was bid to fix my hopes. Weeping alone was sweet to me, and supplied the absence of my friend.

Wretched I now was, and wretched is every soul that is bound by the friendship of mortal things. Behold my heart, my God; O my hope, who cleansest me from the contagion of such affections, and directest my eyes to thee, and pluckest my feet out of the net. O madness! not knowing how to love men as men! O foolish man! bearing with no moderation the lot of humanity! The load of misery burdened me, which I knew thou alone couldst cure; but I was unwilling and impotent, because when I thought of thee, I had only a shadowy idol before me. If I attempted to throw my burden on thee, it returned upon myself, as I found nothing that would support it. I fled however from my country, and came to Carthage.

Time, other objects, and other friendships, gradually lessened my sorrow. But happy is he who loves thee, and his friend in thee, and his enemy for thy sake. For, he alone loses no friend, to whom all are dear in him who is never lost, and who is he but our God, who made and fills heaven and earth? None loses thee, but he who lets thee go; and he who dismisses thee, whither does he fly, but from thee PROPITIOUS, to thee AVERSE? God of power! turn us, and shew thy face, and we shall be saved. For, wherever the soul of man turns itself, it fixes upon sorrow, except in thee. Be not vain, my soul, and deaf in the ear of the heart through the tumult of vanity. The word cries, that thou shouldst return, and there is rest. There with God fix thy mansion, there intrust whatever thou hast, my soul, at least when fatigued with fallacies. If souls please thee, love them in God, and carry them with thee to him as many as thou canst, and say to them, let us love him, he made these things, and he is not far off. The good ye love is from him, but it will deservedly be bitter, if ye love it unjustly, deserting him. Ye seek a happy life: our life descended hither, and bore our death, and destroyed it from the abundance of his own life. After his descent will ye not ascend and live? But why ascend, since ye are too high already? Come down that ye may ascend to God. For by rising up against him ye have fallen. Tell them these things, that they may weep, and so take them with thee to God, because thou sayest these things, from his spirit, if the fire of his love burn in thee.

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* He means the fantastic idea of God, which as a Manichee he had embraced.

I made approaches to thee, and thou repelledst me, because thou resistest the proud; and what was prouder than to assert, that I was naturally what thou art?[*] Alas! of what avail was it, that I understood the logic of Aristotle and what are called the liberal arts, while I had my back to the light, and to those things which really illuminate the face? I had, it is true, a facility of comprehension, and acuteness in argumentation, thy gift, but I sacrificed not thence to thee. Hence they were to me a curse and not a blessing. Yet, all this time, I looked on thee as an immense lucid body, of which I myself was a fragment. How much better was it with thy children of more tardy genius, who did not recede from thy nest, but were fledged and grew up in safety in thy church, and nourished the wing of love with the aliment of sound faith! O Lord our God, let us trust in the shadow of thy wings. "Do thou carry us to hoary hairs."[*] When thou art our strength, we have strength; our own is weakness.

BOOK V.

RECEIVE the sacrifice of my confessions, and heal all my bones, that they may say, Lord, who is like unto thee? The heart, that is shut against thee, excludes not thine eye, nor does the hardness of men's hearts repel thine hand, but thou dissolvest it when thou pleasest, in compassion or in vengeance, and none can hide himself from thy flame. But may my soul praise thee, that it may love thee, and confess to thee thy compassions, that it may praise thee! Let men be converted and seek thee, and behold, thou art there in the heart of those who confess to thee, and cast themselves upon thee, and in thy bosom deplore their evil ways; and thou in mercy wilt wipe their tears, that they may deplore still more, and rejoice in tears, because thou, Lord, refreshest and comfortest them.

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[*] In this blasphemy the Manichees followed the pagan philosophers. They had no idea, also, that God was a spirit. Hence our author's long conflict, before he could form a spiritual idea of God.

[†] Isaiah xlvi. 4.

In the sight of my God I will give an account of the twenty-ninth year of my age. A Manichee bishop named Faustus, had now come to Carthage, a great snare of the Devil, and many were enchanted by his eloquence, which though I could not but commend, I yet distinguished from truth. Report had represented him as a very liberal and accomplished scholar. And as I had read many things of the philosophers, I compared them with the tedious fables of the Manichees, and found the former more probable. Thou regardest, Lord, the humble; the proud thou beholdest afar off. No doubt the foretelling of eclipses, and other things that might be mentioned, demonstrate the truth of the philosophical sciences in secular things, though in their pride they departed far from thee. Unhappy is that man who knows all these things, and knows not thee; but blessed is he who knows thee, though he knows not all these things. But he, who knows both thee and them, is not happier on their account, but on account of thee alone is happy, if knowing thee he glorify thee as God, and be thankful, and be not vain in his imaginations. For, as he is in a better situation, who knows how to possess a tree, and is thankful to thee for the use of it, though he knows neither its height nor breadth, than he who measures it, and counts all its branches, and neither possesses it, nor knows nor has learned his Creator; so the believer, whose property all the riches of the world are, AND

WHO HAVING NOTHING, YET POSSESSES ALL THINGS, by cleaving to thee, whom all things serve, is indisputably better than the most knowing natural philosopher upon earth, who lives in the neglect of thee.*

Yet the rashness of the Manichee writer, who undertook to write of astronomy, though completely ignorant of the science, is inexcusable, especially as he pretended that the Holy Ghost resided personally in him. The ignorance of a believer, in such subjects is very excusable; even if he fancy his mistaken notions in natural philosophy to be branches of religion. But who can bear to hear a pretender to infallible inspiration venting absurdities on the works of nature? Here then I had my doubts concerning the divinity of Manicheism, and in vain proposed them to those of the sect whom I met with. "You must wait till the all-accomplished Faustus comes to Carthage," was all the answer I received. On his arrival I found him an agreeable speaker, and one who could deliver their dotages in a more persuasive tone. But by this time I was surfeited with these subjects, and I had been taught by thee, my God, who hast instructed me marvellously, but secretly, that style and manner, however excellent, were not the same things as sound argument. The address, indeed, the pathos, the propriety of language, and facility of expression in clothing his sentiments delighted me; but my mind was unsatisfied. The proofs of ignorance in science, which I saw in Manicheism, connected with pretensions to infallibility, staggered my mind with respect to their whole system. On freely conversing with him, I found him possessed of all ingenuous frankness, more valuable than all the subjects of my investigation. He owned his ignorance in all philosophy, and left me convinced of it. Grammar alone, and some Ciceronian and other classical furniture, made up his stock of knowledge, and supplied him with a copiousness of diction, which received additional ornament from his natural vivacity of imagination. My hope of discovering truth was now at an end. I remained still a Manichee, because I despaired of succeeding better on any other plan. Thus that same Faustus, who had been the snare of death to many, was the first who relaxed my fetters, though contrary to his own intention. Thy hands, my God, in the secret of thy providence, forsook not my soul: day and night the prayers of my mother came up before thee, and thou wroughtest upon me in ways marvellous indeed, but secret. Thou didst it, my God. FOR MAN'S GOINGS ARE FROM THE LORD, and who affords salvation but thy hand, which restores what thou hast made? It was from thy influence, that I was persuaded to go to Rome to teach, instead of Carthage. The deep recesses of thy wisdom and mercy must be confessed by me in this dispensation. I understood, that at Rome a teacher was not exposed to those turbulent proceedings, which were so common at Carthage. Thus the madness of one set of men, and the friendship of others promising me vain things, were thy means of introducing me into the way of life and peace, and in secret thou madest use of their perverseness and my own. Here I detested real misery, there sought false felicity. But the true cause of this removal was at that time hidden both from me and my mother, who bewailed me going away, and followed me to the sea; but I deceived her, who held me close, with a view either to call me back, or to go along with me. I pretended, that I only meant to keep company with a friend, till he set sail; and with difficulty persuaded her to remain that night in a place dedicated to the memory of Cyprian. But that night I departed privily; she continued weeping and praying. Thus did I deceive my mother, and SUCH a mother; yet was I preserved from the dangers of the sea, foul as I was in all the mire of sin, and a time was coming when thou wipedst away my mother's tears, with which she watered the earth, and even this base undutifulness thou hast forgiven me. And what did she beg of thee, my God, at that time, but that I should be hindered from sailing? THOU, consulting in profound wisdom, and regarding the HINGE of her desire, neglectedst the particular object of her present prayers, that thou mighest gratify the general objects of her devotions. The wind favored us, and carried us out of sight of the shore, when in the morning she was distracted with grief, and filled thine ears with groans and complaints; whilst thou in contempt of her violent agonies, hurriedst me along by my lusts to complete their desires, and punishedst her carnal desire with the just scourge of immoderate griefs.* She loved my presence with her, as is natural to mothers, though in her the affection was uncommonly strong, and she knew not what joy thou wast preparing for her from my absence. She knew not; therefore she wept and wailed. Yet after she had wearied herself in accusing my perfidy and cruelty, she returned to her former employment of praying for me, and went home, while I went to Rome.

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* An excellent comparison between the state of an illiterate believer, who feeds on Christ by faith, and that of an accomplished man of science, even of one skilled in speculative theology among other branches of knowledge, but destitute of spiritual life.

And there I was punished with the scourge of bodily sickness, and I drew nigh to hell, carrying the load of all my sins, original and actual. For Christ had not freed me from them by the body of his flesh through death. For how could a fantastic death, such as I then believed his to be, as a Manichee, deliver my soul? Whither must I have gone, had I at that time departed hence, but to the fire and torments worthy of my deeds according to the truth of thy appointment?† She was ignorant of this, and yet prayed for me absent. But thou, every where present, heardest her where she was and pitiedst me where I was. Still in the crisis of my danger, I desired not thy baptism, as I had done when a boy: I had grown up to my own disgrace and madly derided thy medicine of human misery. How my mother, whose affection, both natural and spiritual towards me was inexpressible, would have borne such a stroke, I cannot conceive. Morning and evening she frequented the church, to hear thy word and to pray, and the salvation of her son was the constant burden of her supplications. Thou heardest her, O Lord, and performedst in due season, what thou hadst predestinated. Thou recoveredst me from the fever, that at length I might obtain also a recovery of still greater importance.

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* It requires a mind well seasoned with christian discernment and humility, to admire in all this the Providence of God bringing good out of evil, to separate what is truly holy and humble in the affection of our author's mother from what was really carnal and earthly, and hence to discover the justness of his reflections.

† Does the reader think this harsh? let him consider whether it can be any thing else than the want of a firm belief of the word of God, and a contempt of his holiness and authority, that can make him think so, and he will do well to apply the awful case to his own conscience.

The Manichees are divided into two bodies, auditors and elect. He, in whose house I lodged, was of the former sort. I myself was ranked among the latter. With them I fancied myself perfectly sinless, and laid the blame of the evils I committed on another nature, that sinned within me,[*] and my pride was highly gratified with the conception. My attachment to this sect, however, grew more lax, as I found the impossibility of discovering truth, and felt a secret predilection in favor of the academic philosophy, which commends a state of doubt and uncertainty.[†] My landlord, who had not so much experience as I of the sect, was elevated with their fancies. I checked his sanguine views, and though the intimacy I had contracted with this people, (for a number of them live at Rome) made be backward to seek elsewhere for truth, I was, however, little solicitous to defend the reputation of their tenets. It was a deplorable evil with me, that my prejudice was so strong against the christian faith. When I thought of thee, my God, I could not conceive any thing but what was corporeal, though of the most exquisite subtilty: but what was immaterial, appeared to be nothing. And here I seemed incurable in error. I did not conceive it possible, that a good Being should create an evil one, and therefore, chose to admit limits to the infinite Author of nature, by supposing him to be controuled by an independent evil principle. Yet, though my ideas were material, I could not bear to think of God being flesh. That was too gross and low in my apprehensions. Thy only begotten Son appeared to me as the most lucid part of thee afforded for our salvation. I concluded that such a nature could not be born of the Virgin Mary without partaking of human flesh, which I thought must pollute it. Hence arose my fantastic ideas of Jesus,† so destructive of all piety. Thy spiritual children may smile at me with charitable sympathy, if they read these my confessions; such, however, were my views. Indeed, while I was at Carthage, the discourse of one Helpidius had moved me in some degree, who produced from the New-Testament several arguments against their positions, which appeared invincible; and their answer appeared to me to be weak, which yet they did not deliver openly, but in secret; namely, that the scriptures of the New-Testament had been falsified by some, who desired to insert Judaism into christianity, while they themselves produced no uncorrupted copies.* Still did I pant under those masses of materialism, and was prevented from breathing the simple and pure air of thy truth.

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[*] Every human soul was supposed by the Manichees to have in it a mixture of the good and the evil principle.

[†] A very natural and common effect of reasoning pride. When a man attempts to discover and adjust religious truth by leaning to his own understanding, he frequently finds skepticism the sole result of his most painful investigations; and every thing appears doubtful to him, except the incompetency of fallen man to understand these things, and the propriety of seeking a new nature and a spiritual understanding from above. If the errors of Manicheism appear very absurd, there are other modes of deviation from scripture truth, which would appear no less so, were they as unfashionable in our times.

Some unexpected disadvantages in the way of my profession laid me open to any probable offer of employ in other parts of Italy. From Milan a requisition was made to Symmachus, prefect of Rome, to send a professor of rhetoric to that city. By the interest of my Manichean friends, I obtained the honor, and came to Milan. There I waited on Ambrose, the bishop, a man renowned for piety through the world, and who then ministered the bread of life to thy people with much zeal and eloquence. The man of God received me like a father, and I conceived an affection for him, not as a teacher of truth, which I had no idea of discovering in thy church, but as a man kind to me; and I studiously attended his lectures, only with a curious desire of discovering whether fame had done justice to his eloquence or not. I stood indifferent and fastidious with respect to his matter, and at the same time was delighted with the sweetness of his language, more learned indeed, but less soothing and agreeable than that of Faustus. In their thoughts there was no comparison; the latter erred in Manichean fallacies, the former taught salvation in the most salutary manner. But salvation is far from sinners, such as I then was, and yet I was gradually approaching to it and knew not. As I now despaired of finding the way to God, I had no concern with sentiments; language alone I chose to regard. But the ideas which I neglected came into my mind, together with the words with which I was pleased. I gradually was brought to attend to the doctrine of the bishop. I found reason to rebuke myself for the hasty conclusions I had formed of the perfectly indefensible nature of the law and the prophets. A number of difficulties, started upon them by the Manichees, found in the expositions of Ambrose a satisfactory solution. The possibility of finding truth in the church of Christ appeared; and I began to consider by what arguments I might convict Manicheism of falshood. Could I have formed an idea of a spiritual substance, their whole fabric had been overturned, but I could not. Moreover I found the philosophers in general explained the system of nature better than the Manichees. It seemed shameful to continue in connexion with a sect replete with such evident absurdities, that I could not but prefer the pagan philosophers to them, though I dared not trust these with the healing of my soul, because they were without the saving name of Christ. In conclusion, I determined to remain a catechumen in the church recommended to me by my parents, till I saw my way more clearly.

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† The Manichees, like all other heretics, could not stand before the scriptures. They professedly rejected the Old Testament, as belonging to the malignant principle; and when they were pressed with the authority of the New, as corroborating the old, they pretended the New was adulterated. Is there any new thing under the sun? Did not Lord Bollingbroke set up the authority of St John against Paul? Have we not heard of some parts of the gospels as not genuine, because they suit not Socinian views? Genuine Christian principles alone will bear the test, nor fear the scrutiny of the whole word of God.

* It is evident that this sect comprehended in it the fundamental errors of the Docites.

BOOK VI.

O THOU! my hope from my youth, where wast thou? thou madest me wiser than the fowls of heaven; yet I walked through darkness and slippery places. My mother was now come to me, courageous through piety, following me by land and sea, and secure of thy favor in all dangers. She found me very hopeless with respect to the discovery of truth. However, when I told her my present situation, she answered, that she believed in Christ, that before she left this world, she should see me a sound believer. To thee her prayers and tears were still more copious, that thou wouldst perfect what thou hadst begun, and with much zeal and affection she attended the ministry of Ambrose. Him she loved as an angel of God, because she understood that I had broken off from Manichean connexions through his means, and she confidently expected me to pass from sickness to health, though with a critical danger in the interval.

She had been used to bring bread and wine for the commemoration of the saints; and still retaining the African custom, she was prohibited by the door-keeper, understanding that the bishop had forbidden the practice. Another person would not soon have been obeyed, but Ambrose was her favorite, and was himself amazed at the promptitude of her obedience. The reasons of the prohibition were, the fear of excess, and the danger of superstition, the practice itself being very similar to those of the pagans.* Instead therefore of a canister full of the fruits of the earth, she henceforward, on the commemoration-days of the martyrs, gave alms, according to her ability, to the poor, and received the Lord's supper, if it was celebrated on those occasions. Ambrose himself was charmed with the fervor of her piety, and the amiableness of her good works, and often brake out in his preaching, when he saw me, congratulating me that I had such a mother, little knowing what sort of a son she had, who doubted of all these things, and even apprehended the way of life to be impervious to man. Nor did I groan to thee in prayer for help, intent only on study, and restless in discussion and investigations. In a secular view Ambrose himself appeared to be an happy man, revered as he was by the imperial court; only his celibacy appeared to me in a melancholy light. But what hope he bore within, what struggles he had against the temptations of grandeur, what was his real comfort in adversity, his hidden strength and joy derived from the bread of life, of these things I could form no idea; for I had no experience; nor did he know the fluctuations of my soul, nor the dangerous pit in which I was enslaved. It was out of my power to consult him as I could wish, surrounded as he was with crouds of persons, whose necessities he relieved. During the little time in which he was from them, (and the time was but little,) he either refreshed his body with food, or his mind with reading. Hence I had no opportunity to unbosom myself to him. A few words of conversation sufficed not. I expected in vain to find him at leisure for a long conversation.* I profited however by his sermons. Every Lord's Day I heard him instructing the people, and I was more and more convinced of the falsity of the calumnies which those deceivers had invented against the divine books. And when I found, that the Mosaic expression of man made after the image of God was understood by no believer to imply, that God was in human form, though I still could form no idea of a spiritual substance, I was glad and blushed to think how many years I had falsely accused the church, instead of learning by careful enquiry.*

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* Here is a striking instance of the growth of pagan superstition in the church. The torrent was strong, and notwithstanding occasional checks which it received, it at length overspread all christendom, and quite obscured the light of the gospel.

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* Doubtless, could the modesty of Augustine have prevailed on him to desire such a conference, he might have obtained it. And what a bishop then was in the church of Christ may be seen in Ambrose.

The state of my mind was now something altered; ashamed of past miscarriages and delusions, and hence the more anxious to be guided right for the time to come. I was completely convinced of the falshood of the many things I had once uttered with so much confidence. I was pleased to find, that the church of Christ was plainly free from the monstrous absurdity of which I had accused her. I found too, that thy holy men of old held not those sentiments with which they were charged. And I was pleased to find Ambrose very diligently commending a rule to his people, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;"† when the bishop, removing the mystic veil, opened to us those things, which according to the letter might seem to teach perverseness: what he said was agreeable to me, though I was far from being convinced of its truth.‡ My former mistakes and blameable rashness rendered me now exceedingly skeptical, and I wanted the fullest intuitive evidence. By faith, indeed, I might have been healed. But having experienced a bad physician, I now dreaded a good one. By believing alone could I be cured; yet for fear of believing false things I refused to be healed, resisting thy hands, who hast made for us the medicines of faith, and hast sprinkled them over the diseases of the world, and hast attributed so great authority to them.

I could not, however, but prefer the general doctrine of the church, and think it was more reasonable to enjoin faith in subjects incapable of demonstration, than to require the belief of most absurd fables, after pretending to promise us knowledge. By degrees, thou Lord, with a mild and merciful hand regulating and composing my heart, enabledst me to consider how many things I believed which I had never seen, what credit I give to friends, to physicians, to many others, without which the common affairs of life could never be transacted; also how firmly I believed who were my parents, though I could not possibly have any demonstration concerning the matter. Thus thou persuadest me, that those who believed thy books were not to be condemned of credulity, but those who disbelieve them were to be condemned for unreasonable obstinacy, especially as their credibility was established by the great authority which they had obtained throughout the world. "How do you know that those books were divinely inspired?" appeared to me now a question implying a doubt not worthy to be attended to. For amidst all the contentiousness of philosophers which had so much agitated my mind, I had ever preserved the belief of thy existence and divine Providence. Sometimes, indeed, this belief was stronger, sometimes weaker, yet it never left me, notwithstanding my great perplexity concerning thy nature, or the way of approaching thee. As we are then too infirm to discover truth by abstract reasoning, and therefore need the authority of Divine revelation, I apprehended, that thou wouldest never have attributed such high authority and influence to the scriptures through the world, unless this had been the appointed means of our knowing thee and seeking thy will; and now the absurdities, which the literal interpretation of many things seemed to involve, after I had heard a probable exposition of several of them, I referred to the depth of mysteries; and hence the authority of the books appeared more venerable and more credible, as they in fact lay open to every one's view and yet reserved the dignity of their secret by the most profound sentiments, offering themselves to all in a language the most open and the most humble, and exercising the attention of serious souls; so that they received all in their popular bosom, and through narrow holes transmitted only a few to thee, though many more in number, than they would do, if they were not recommended by such high authority, and did not draw in the multitude by the garb of sacred humility. I considered these things, and thou wast present with me; I sighed, and thou heardest me; I fluctuated, and thou directedst my course; I went along the broad way of the world, and thou didst not desert me.*

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* A remarkable instance of partiality attended with a remarkable frankness of confession. Augustine for nine years believed that the general church held the corporeal form of the Supreme Being, though he might with ease have learned the contrary at any time. But heresy in all ages acts in the same disingenuous spirit.

† An important observation surely! abused much by Origen and many of his followers, to fanciful and capricious purposes. In Augustine, however, the distinction between letter and spirit was generally made commensurate with that between flesh and spirit, and in effect distinguished self-righteous from evangelical religion.

‡ It would be well, if many who stumble at the Old Testament, were more convinced of their own ignorance and incompetency, for want of a just and solid acquaintance with its typical nature and the laws of interpreting it.

My heart was thirsting after honors, profits, and marriage, and thou deridest me. In these lusts I suffered the bitterest difficulties; thou being so much the more propitious, the less thou sufferedst any thing to be pleasant to me which was not thyself. See, Lord, my heart. Now let it stick close to thee, which thou hast freed from the tenacious glue of death. How miserable was I, and how didst thou cause me to feel my misery on that day, when I was preparing to recite a panegyric to the emperor, in which there were many falshoods, and I expected applause, even from those who knew them to be falshoods, when my heart brooded over its anxieties, and passing through a certain street of Milan, I saw a poor beggar, I suppose at that time with a full belly, jocund and merry! I sighed, and spake to my friends who were with me, of the many pains of our madness, because from all the toils, which with so much labor and vexation we underwent, we expected only that same rest and security, which that beggar had already attained, though we were uncertain, whether we should ever reach it. In truth, he was not possessed of true joy, but I, by the ambiguous windings of art, sought it in a more delusory way. He, however, was evidently merry, I full of anxiety; he at his ease, I full of fear. Were I asked, whether frame of mind I should prefer, I should without hesitation choose his. Yet if I were asked, whether I would be Augustine, or the beggar, I should say the former. How perverse was this? Much to this purpose did I say to my friends, and often observed how things were with me, and I found myself miserable, and I grieved, and doubled that misery. And if any thing prosperous smiled upon me, I was backward to lay hold of it, because it flew away almost before I could lay hold of it.*

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* We have seen here the close thoughts of an original thinker, who had once as strong a prejudice as any against scripture truth, owning his rashness in condemning what he had not understood, convinced of the rationality of the scriptures, after he had in some measure discovered the true key to their meaning, persuaded of their divinity from their providential propagation in the world, owning the unreasonableness of expecting demonstration, and of refusing assent to grounds of faith such as determine us in common life, spying a divine beauty in the plainness and simplicity of their language, adapted to all capacities, and comprehending at length the necessity of a serious mind, to render them effectual to saving purposes. Skeptics and infidels would do well to follow him in this train of thought: they need not be ashamed to imitate a person so acute and ingenious.

My most intimate conversations on these subjects were with Alypius and Nebridius. The former, my townsman, had studied under me both at Tagasta and at Carthage, and we were very dear to each other. The torrent of fashion at the latter place, hurried him into the Circensian games, of which he became extravagantly fond. I was vexed to see him give into a taste so destructive of all sobriety and prudence in youth, and cannot but take notice of the providential manner, in which he was delivered. While I was one day expounding in my school at Carthage, an allusion to the Circensian games occurred as proper to illustrate my subject, on which occasion I severely censured those who were fond of that madness. I meant nothing for Alypius; but thou, Lord, who hadst designed him for a minister of thy word, and who wouldest make it manifest, that his correction should be thy own work, infixedst a deep sting of conviction into his heart; he believed that I spake it on his account, loved me the more for it, and shook off the Circensian follies. But he was afterwards involved in Manicheism with me, deceived by the appearance of good. Afterwards he came to Rome, to learn the law, and there was ensnared with a new evil, a fondness for the barbarous sports of gladiators, to which he had had a strong aversion. Some friends of his carried him to them by force, while he declared with great confidence, that his mind and eyes should still be alienated from those spectacles. For a while he closed his eyes with great resolution, till on a certain occasion, when the whole house rang with shouting, overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes to see what was the matter. Beholding a gladiator wounded, on the sight of the blood, he was inebriated with the sanguinary pleasure. He gazed, he shouted, he was inflamed, he carried away with him the madness, which stimulated him to repeat his visits; he became enamoured of the sports, even more than those, who had dragged him thither against his will, and seduced others. Thence thou with a strong and merciful hand recoveredst him at length, but long after, and taughtest him to put his confidence not in himself, but in thee.* On another occasion, Alypius was apprehended as a thief, and circumstances seemed to tell so much against him, that it was by a particular providence his innocence was cleared. But he was to be a dispenser of thy word, an examiner of many causes in thy church, and he learnt caution and wisdom from this event. Him I found at Rome, and he removed with me to Milan, and practised in the law with uncommon uprightness and integrity. With me he was uncertain, with respect to his plan of religion and the way of happiness.

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* A lively picture of human vanity, perfectly agreeable to the whole tenor of ECCLESIASTES, and evidencing the distress of those in high life to be equal to that of those in low at least! Ambition receives no cure from the review, till the man knows what is better.

My friend Nebridius also left a good paternal estate in the neighborhood of Carthage, for the sake of enjoying my company; and we three were panting after happiness, till thou shouldest give us meat in due season; and amidst all the bitterness which attended our worldly concerns, while we were wishing to see the end of these things, we found ourselves in darkness, and we said with sighs, how long? yet we still followed objects with which we were dissatisfied, because we knew nothing better to substitute in their room.

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*It is obvious to observe hence the folly of self-confidence, and the bewitching power of temptation over so weak and corrupt a creature as man. Many who would deem it impossible that they should enter with spirit into the obscenity of the stage, or the cruelties of the slave-trade, by a little indulgence may soon become what beforehand they would abhor.

As to myself in particular, I reviewed attentively how long I had been in pursuit of the true wisdom, with a determination to give up secular pursuits in case of success. I had begun at nineteen, and I was now in my thirtieth year, still miserable, anxious, procrastinating, fed with tantalizing hopes, solicited in my conscience to set apart a portion of time each day for the care of my soul. "Your mornings are for your pupils: why do not you employ to serious purpose the afternoons: but then what time shall I have to attend the levees of the great, and to unbend my mind with necessary relaxation? What then, if death should suddenly seize you, and judgment overtake you unprepared? Yet, on the other side, what if death itself be the extinction of my being? But far be from my soul the idea. God would never have given such high proofs of credibility to christianity, nor have shewn himself so marvellously among men, if the life of the soul be consumed with the death of the body. Why then do not I give myself wholly to God? But do not be in too great a hurry. You have friends of consequence, by whom you may rise in the world!"

In such an agitation of mind as this did I live, seeking happiness, and yet flying from it. To be divorced from the enjoyments of the world I could not bear, particularly from female society; and as I had no idea of acquiring continency but by my own strength, I was a stranger to the way of prayer and divine supply of grace. Thou, Lord, wilt give, if we solicit thine ears with internal groaning, and in solid faith cast our care on thee. My mother was solicitous and importunate for my being married, that I might in that state receive baptism. And I agreed to marry a young person, who was at present too young; as she was agreeable to me, I consented to wait almost two years.—During this interval a number of us, about ten in all, formed a scheme of living in common in a society separate from the world, in which a townsman of mine Romanianus, a man of considerable opulence was particularly earnest. But some of us being married men, and others desirous of becoming so, the scheme came to nothing. Thou deridest our plans, and preparedst thy own, meaning to give us food in due season, and to open thine hand, and fill our souls with blessedness. In the mean time my sins were multiplied, and the woman with whom I had cohabited, returning into Africa under a vow of never more being acquainted with our sex, and leaving with me a natural son which I had by her, I, impatient of the delay, took another woman in her room. Praise and glory be to thee, O Fountain of mercies, I became more miserable, and thou approachedst nearer. Thou wast going to snatch me out of the mire of pollution, and I knew it not.—The fear of death and future judgment was the check which restrained me. This had never left me amidst the variety of opinions with which I was agitated, and I owned to Alypius and Nebridius, that the Epicurean doctrine would have had the preference in my judgment, could I have fallen in with Epicurus' idea of the annihilation of the man at death; and I inquired why we might not be happy, if we were immortal, and lived in a perpetual state of voluptuousness without any fear of losing it, ignorant as I was of the misery of being so drenched in carnality, as not to see the excellency of embracing goodness itself for its own sake. I did not consider, that I conferred on these base topics with friends whom I loved, and was incapable of tasting pleasure, even according to the carnal ideas I then had of pleasure without friends.*

O my serpentine ways! Wo to the soul which presumed, if it departed from thee, that it should find any thing better. I turned backward and forward on my sides, my back, and my belly; and all things were hard, and thou alone my rest, and lo! thou comest and freest us from our miserable delusions, and placest us in thy way, and comfortest us, and sayest, "Run, and I will bear you, I will carry you through, and bear you still."

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* A strong intimation, that happiness consists in love, or friendship. Whence the pleasure of friendship with Jesus, an Almighty, all-sufficient friend, made man for us, and sympathizing with us, appears to give us the just and adequate idea of bliss.

BOOK VII.

And now the older I grew, the more defiled was I with vanity, still destitute of the spiritual idea of God; not conceiving however of thee, O Lord, as existing in human form, an error of which I now saw, I had unjustly accused the catholic church, but still viewing thee as an object of sense however refined; and when I removed the ideas of space and quantity, thou seemedst to be nothing at all. For thou hadst not yet illuminated my darkness. The arguments of my friend Nebridius, appeared to me conclusive against the Manichean idea of an independent evil principle in nature. I was grown firm in the belief, that in the Lord is nothing corruptible, mutable, or in any sense imperfect; that evil must not be imputed to him, in order that we may clear ourselves of blame with the Manichees. Still, however, a question distressed me, how came evil into being at all? admitting that it lies in the will of man, that the distinction between a natural and moral inability is real and just, and that the former is not the proper subject of blame as the latter is, still I inquired, who inserted in me this bitter plant, when I was made by my God of infinite sweetness? I inquired, whence came evil, and I saw not the evil which was in my investigations. I stated the great difficulty in various lights, and it still appeared as inexplicable as ever. The faith, however, of Christ our Lord and Savior remained firm with me, rude and unformed indeed; yet my mind forsook it not, and was imbibing it daily more and more.*

From the vain science of astrology also, which I had cultivated with obstinacy, I was delivered, partly by the reasonings of my excellent friend Nebridius, and partly by a story which I heard of a master and slave born at the same point of time, whose different fortunes in life appeared to be a sufficient confutation of all predictions by the stars;† and the case of Esau and Jacob in holy writ illustrated the same thing. But it was thou, and thou only, who recalledst me from the death of all error, O thou Life that knowest not death, and thou Wisdom who illuminatest indigent minds.—Thou brakest this bond for me; still was I seeking whence comes evil? Yet, by all the fluctuations of thought thou didst not suffer me to be seduced from the faith of thy existence, of thy perfections, of thy providence, or to doubt that in Christ thy Son and in the scriptures thou hast laid down the way of human salvation. What were the groanings, the labors of my heart! While I silently enquired, distressed and confounded, thou knewest the whole, thou knewest what I suffered, and no man whatever, not my most intimate friends, could know, by any relation which I could give, the bitterness of my soul. My folly was, to look for a local, external happiness. No such was found to receive me. By the original dignity of my nature, I was above all sensual objects, inferior to thee, and thou, my true joy, madest me subject to thyself, and subjectedst to me the works of thy hands. This was the middle region of health, in which I might serve thee and rule the body. But I proudly rose up against thee, and was justly punished, by being enslaved to those things which should have been my subjects; they gave me no respite nor rest. My pride separated me from thee, and closed my eyes with its own tumor. But thou, Lord, remainest for ever, and retainest not anger for ever, thou pitiest us and rememberest that we are dust and ashes. It pleased thee to remove my deformities, and by internal incentives thou agitatedst me that I might be impatient till thou madest thyself assuredly known.

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* I have endeavored to compress the author's accounts of his difficulties in two questions, of the substance of God and of the origin of evil, into a small compass, not thinking it needful to translate them at large. Manichcism was the cause of his trouble in regard to the former. The latter is in all ages a natural temptation to our proud minds, and we are slow to learn to answer it with St. Paul, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. ix. Humility will end the subject there; and pride is not to be satisfied by any investigations.

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† Few men have candor enough to put themselves in the places and scenes of others. Nothing is more certain than this, that Augustine and Melancthon were men of extraordinary understanding; both however were addicted to astrology and absurdity, which even the weakest in our age escape. Such is the difference of the times!

to me by internal illumination. The morbid tumors of my mind were gradually lessening under thy secret medicinal hand, and the eyes of my understanding, darkened and confounded as they were, by the sharp eye-salve of salutary pains were healing day by day.

And first, as thou wouldest shew me how thou resistest the proud, and givest grace to the humble; and how great thy mercy is shewn to be in the way of humility; thou procuredst for me, by means of a person highly inflated with philosophical pride, some of the books of Plato translated into Latin, in which I read passages concerning the Divine Word, similar to those in the first chapter of St. John's gospel; in which his eternal Divinity was exhibited, but not his incarnation, his atonement, his humiliation, and glorification of his human nature. For thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes; that men might come to thee weary and heavy laden, and that thou mightest refresh them; thou who art meek and lowly in heart, who directest the meek in judgment, and teachest the gentle thy ways, seeing our low estate and forgiving all our sins. This is a knowledge not to be obtained, while men are lifted up by the pomp and grandeur of what appears to them a sublimer doctrine. Thus did I begin to form better views of the divine nature, even from Plato's writings, as thy people of old spoiled the Egyptians of their gold, because, whatever good there is in any thing, is all thy own, and at the same time I was enabled to escape the evil which was in those books, and not to attend to the idols of Egypt.

However, I was hence admonished to retire into myself under thy guidance, and I was enabled to do it, because thou art my helper. I entered and saw with the eye of my mind the immutable light of the Lord, perfectly distinct from sensible light, not only in degree, but in kind. Nor was it in the same manner above my mind, that oil is above water, or as heaven is above earth, but superior, because he made me, and

I was inferior, because made by him.* He who knows truth, knows this light, and he who knows it, knows eternity. Love knows it. O eternal Truth, true Love, and loving Eternity! Thou art my God, I pant after thee day and night. And when I first knew thee, thou tookest me that I might see that "to be" which I saw, and that I who saw, "as yet was not." Thou impressedst repeatedly my infirm sight, thou shinedst on me vehemently, and I trembled with love and horror, and I found that I was far from thee in a region of dissimilitude, as if I heard thy voice from on high, "I am the food of those that are full of age, grow and thou shalt eat me." Nor shalt thou change me into thyself but shalt thyself be changed into me. And I said, can God be nothing, since he is neither diffused through finite nor infinite space? And thou criedst from afar, "I am, that I am,"† and I heard with my heart and could not doubt. Nay, I should sooner doubt my own existence, than that that is not truth which is understood by the things that were made.

I now began to understand, that every creature of thine hand is in its nature good, and that universal nature is justly called upon to praise the Lord for his goodness.* The evil which I sought after has no positive existence; were it a substance, it would be good, because every thing individually, as well as all things collectively, are good. Evil appeared to be a want of agreement in some parts to others. My opinion of the two independent principles, in order to account for the origin of evil, was without foundation. Evil is not a thing to be created; let good things only forsake their just place, office, and order; and then, though all be good in their nature, evil, which is only a privative, abounds, and produces positive misery. I asked what was iniquity, and I found it to be no substance, but a perversity of the will which declines from thee, the Supreme Substance, to lower things, and casts away its internal excellencies, and swells with pride externally.†

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* He had been long corrupted by the atheistic views which he had learned from the Manichees, and no wonder that he now found it so difficult to conceive aright of God. There appears something divinely spiritual in the manner of his deliverance. That the Platonic books also should give the first occasion is very remarkable; though I apprehend the Latin translation which he saw, had improved on Plato, by the mixture of something scriptural, according to the manner of the Ammonian philosophers.

† Exodus iii. * Psalm cxlviii.

And I wondered that I now began to have a desire after thee, and no longer took a fantasm for thee. I was not urgent to enjoy thee, my God, for though I was hurried toward thee by thy beauty, I was presently carried downward from thee by my own weight, and I could no longer sin without groaning; the weight was carnal habit. The memory of thee was with me, and I did not doubt of the reality of that divine essence to which I should adhere, but of myself being ever brought into a state of spiritual existence. I saw thy invisible things by the things which were made, but I could not fix my attention to thee; my corruption exerting itself, I returned to my usual habits, but I could not shake off the fragrance of memory, smelling the true good, regretting the loss, and impotent to taste and enjoy.‡

I now sought the way of obtaining strength to enjoy thee, and found it not, till I embraced the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER,* calling and saying I am the way, the truth, and the life. For the word was made flesh, that thy wisdom might suckle our infancy. But I did not yet in humility hold the humble Jesus my Lord, nor know the mysterious power of his weakness, that he might humble, nourish, and at length exalt heavy laden souls. Far other thoughts had I conceived of Christ, I had viewed him only as a man of unequalled wisdom. But, of the mystery of the word made flesh, I had not formed the least suspicion. Only I concluded from the things written of him, that he must have had a human soul. Alypius indeed had conceived, that the catholic faith denied him the spirit of a man, and was a longer time prejudiced against the truth, because he confounded the church with the Apollinarian heresy. As to myself, I was not till sometime after taught to distinguish the truth from the opinion of Photinus;† but there must be heresies, that they who are of the truth may be made manifest.

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† Perhaps a more just account of the manner in which evil is produced can scarce be given; it is certainly well calculated to confute the principles of Manicheism.

‡ In many true converts this was their state exactly, while God was turning them from darkness to light. Such a sense of God, as never before was known, is attained, sufficient to conquer the false and injurious thoughts of him which had been before imbibed, be they what they may. But the man feels his impotence with respect to good, and he must, with Augustine, struggle and endure for a time, till the strength of Jesus is perfected in his weakness.

* Here is a clear testimony to the authenticity and genuine interpretation of that remarkable text, Rom. ix. 5, the light of which has been so peculiarly offensive to those, whom fashionable heresies in our age have darkened.

But when by reading the Platonic books, I began to conceive of the immaterial, infinite Supreme, I talked of these things like a person of experience, but was perishing, because void of Christ. I desired to appear wise, was puffed up with knowledge, and wept not. Love, on the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus, was to me unknown. The books of Plato knew not this; still would I remark the providence of my God in leading me to study them, before I searched the scriptures, that I might remember, how I had been affected by them, and when afterwards my wounds should be healed by thy hand through the scriptures, I might distinguish the difference between presumption and confession, between those who see whither we ought to go, without knowing the means, and those who see the way itself leading to the actual inheritance. Had I been informed at first by thy scriptures, and thou hadst endeared thyself to me in their familiarity, an after-acquaintance with Plato might either have shaken my faith, or raised in me an undue estimation of the worth of his writings.

With eagerness, therefore, I took up the volume of inspiration,* and particularly the apostle Paul, and those questions in which he once had seemed inconsistent with himself, and the law, and the prophets, were now no more. There now appeared one uniform tenor of godliness, and I learnt to rejoice with trembling, and I took up the book, and found whatever truth I had read there, is said with this recommendation of thy grace, that he who sees should not so GLORY AS IF HE HAD NOT RECEIVED, not only that which he sees, but the power of seeing itself.[†] For what hath he, which he hath not received? And he who cannot see afar, should however walk in the way, by which he may come, see, and lay hold. For though he be delighted WITH THE LAW OF GOD IN THE INWARD MAN, YET WHAT SHALL HE DO WITH THE OTHER LAW IN HIS MEMBERS WARRING AGAINST THE LAW OF HIS MIND, AND BRINGING HIM INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE LAW OF SIN, WHICH IS IN HIS MEMBERS?[‡] For thou, Lord, art just, but we have sinned and dealt wickedly, and thy hand is heavy upon us, and we are justly delivered up to the power of the old sinner who has the power of death, because he persuaded us to follow his will, by which he did not stand in the truth. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom the prince of this world could find nothing worthy of death, and who by his death blotted out the hand writing that was against us? The Platonic books had nothing of this, nor the face of piety, the tears of confession, the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart, salvation, the spouse, the holy city, the earnest of the Holy Spirit, the cup of our redemption. None there hear, "Come unto me all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is one thing to see a land of peace at a distance, with no practicability of attaining it, and another to pursue the right road towards it under the care of the heavenly Commander, who made the road for your use. I was wonderfully affected with these views, while I read THE LEAST OF THINE APOSTLES, and I considered thy works and trembled.

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† Which seems to have been the same with Sabellianism.

* It may be remarked here, how depraved the taste of man is, and how much and how long he will suffer before he give himself simply to the instruction of God's own words.

[†] He means the inestimable privilege of spiritual understanding, through his want of which St. Paul had long appeared to him contradictory, confused, and disgusting. He is well qualified to recommend to others the value of divine teaching, who like Augustine, is experiencing it in himself. Nothing teaches humility like such experience.

[†] Rom. vii.

BOOK VIII.

ALL MY BONES SHALL SAY, LORD, WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE? thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. How thou brakest them, I will relate, and all who worship thee, when they hear these things, shall bless the Lord. Though now confirmed in my doctrinal views, my heart was yet uncleansed; I approved of the Savior, but liked not his narrow way, and thou inspiredst me with a desire of going to Simplician, an aged, experienced christian even from his youth, who seemed capable of instructing me in my present fluctuations.—My desires no longer being inflamed with the hope of honor and money, I was displeased with the servitude of the world in which I lived. Thy sweetness was now more agreeable in mine eyes; but another tie still detained me in which I had permission indeed in a legal way, though exhorted to the higher and nobler practice of celibacy.* I had heard from the mouth of truth, that there are eunuchs, WHO HAVE MADE THEMSELVES EUNUCHS FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN'S SAKE.

I went then to Simplician, the spiritual father of bishop Ambrose himself, who loved him as his father. I explained to him my religious situation. When I was relating, that I had read some Platonic books translated by Victorinus a Roman rhetorician, who had died a christian, he congratulated me on having met with that philosopher rather than any of the rest; because when they are full of fallacy, in him intimations are given of God and of his word.† Then for my practical instruction, he gave me the narrative of the conversion of Victorinus, with whom he had been intimate at Rome. Thy grace was indeed admirable in that convert. He was a man of great learning, far advanced in life, well skilled in all liberal knowledge;

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* Corinthians vii.

† Here I apprehend is a proof of the decay of christian taste in the church at that time, the consequence of Ammonianism and Origenism, namely, a disposition to find in Plato what he has not. What communication hath the temple of God with idols?

he had read, criticised, and illustrated many philosophers; he had taught many illustrious senators; had been honored by a statue erected in the Roman forum, as a reward of his magisterial labors; and even to his old age was a worshipper of idols, and a partaker of all the rites, to which almost the whole Roman nobility at that time were addicted; moreover he had, many years, defended the monstrous and absurd objects of worship, to which the common people had been accustomed. But now he was not ashamed to become a child of thy Christ, an infant of thy fountain, with his neck subjected to the yoke of humility, and his forhead subdued to the reproach of the cross. O Lord, thou, who bowedst the heavens and camedst down, who touchedst the mountains, and they smoked, by what means didst thou insinuate thyself into his heart! He read, as Simplician told me, the holy Scriptures, and studiously investigated all christian literature, and told my instructor, not openly but in secrecy, as to a friend, "Know that I am already a christian." He answered, "I shall not believe it, nor rank you among christians, till I see you in the church of Christ." But he smiling answered, "Do walls then make christians?" This kind of dialogue was frequently repeated between them. For Victorinus feared to offend his friends, men of rank and dignity, and he dreaded the loss of reputation. But after that by further studying of the word and by secret prayer he had acquired more strength, and feared to be denied by Christ before the angels, if he denied him before men, and felt himself condemned for being ashamed of christian sacraments, though he had not been ashamed of demon-worship, he blushed at his false modesty; and suddenly said to Simplician, "Let us go to the church, I wish to be made a christian." The venerable old saint, unable to contain his joy, went with him, when he was imbued with the first sacraments of instruction. Not long after he gave in his name, that he might have the benefit of christian baptism. Rome was astonished; the church rejoiced. The proud saw and were indignant, and gnashed with their teeth and pined away;

but, the Lord his God was the hope of thy servant, and he no longer regarded lying vanities. At length, when the season came on of professing his belief, which profession is usually delivered at Rome from a high place in the sight of the faithful, in a certain form of words gotten by heart, by those who are to partake of thy grace in baptism, an offer was made by the presbyters to Victorinus, that he should repeat them more secretly, as was the custom for some who were likely to be disturbed through bashfulness. But he chose rather to profess his salvation in the sight of the holy multitude; for there was no salvation in rhetoric, and yet he had publicly professed it. When he mounted the pulpit to repeat, with a noise of congratulation, as many as knew him, resounded his name; and who did not know him? Amidst the general joy, the sound, though checked with decent reverence, went around, "Victorinus, Victorinus." They exulted at the sudden sight of him, and were as suddenly silent, that they might hear him. He pronounced the form of words with an excellent confidence, and all wished to hold him in their bosom, and they actually did so in love and joy.*

O good God! what is the cause that men more rejoice in the salvation of a soul despaired of, than if it had always been in a state of security! For even thou, merciful Father, rejoicest more over one penitent, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, and we hear with peculiar pleasure the recovery of thy prodigal son. Now what is the reason, that the mind is more delighted with things recovered, than with things never lost? Human life is full of such instances. Is this the law of human happiness? How high art thou in the highest, and how inscrutable in the deepest. Thou never recedest from us, and with reluctance we return to thee? Awake, O Lord, and do, quicken and recall us, inflame and carry us along; burn, be sweet to our taste, and let us now love and run. The joy of Victorinus' conversion indeed was great, because his influence and authority, it was hoped might be useful to the salvation of many. For far be it from thee, that in thine house there should be respect of persons, since thou RATHER HAST CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD, TO CONFOUND THE STRONG, AND BASE THINGS OF THE WORLD, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. What a treasure had the heart and tongue of Victorinus been to Satan! well did it become thy sons to exult, because our king had bound the strong man, and they saw his goods to be taken from him, and cleansed, and fitted for thy honour, and to every good work.

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* I thought a careful translation of this story was proper. It is an instance of victorious grace, something like that which we have more at large related by Augustine concerning himself. It shews how disreputable real christianity was among the great, even in countries, where it was the established religion, as was then the case at Rome, and what grace is neeeful to cause men to be willing to bear the cross of Christ, and it illustrates also some christian customs and discipline at that time.

Hearing these things from Simplician, I was inflamed with a desire of imitation. But after he had informed me father, that Victorinus, on occasion of Julian's prohibitory law, had given up his professorship, I found an inclination to imitate him, bound as I was to the same calling, not by a foreign chain, but my own iron will. The enemy held my will, thence formed my chain, and held me fast. From a perverse will was formed lust, from the indulgence of lust was formed habit, and habit unresisted became necessity. Of such links was my chain of slavery composed; and the new will, which was beginning in me, to worship thee freely, and enjoy thee my sole certain pleasure, was not yet strong enough to overcome the old one, hardened by custom. Thus two wills, the old and the new, the flesh and the spirit contended within me, and between them tore my very soul.* Thus did I understand by my own experience what I had read, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.† I indeed was actuated by both, but more by that which I approved, than by that which I disapproved. I had now, no just excuse; truth was certain to me, yet I was loth to serve thee, and was as afraid to be rid of my impediments, as I ought to have been of contracting them. My meditations on thee, were like the attempts of men desirous of awaking, but sinking again into sleep. I had not an heart to answer thee, AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST, AND ARISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.‡ By and by—shortly—let me alone a little—these were the answers of my heart. But, by and by had no bounds, and let me alone a little, went to a great length. In vain was I delighted with thy law in the inner man, when another law in my members watred against the law of my mind. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death, but thy grace through Jesus Christ our Lord?

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* Excellent comment on Rom. vii.—a description only to be understood by experienced christians.

† Galat. v. where the same subject is more briefly handled: the conflict is well known to true christians all their days, though it most strikes their minds at first. In the unconverted, it can have no existence, because the will is inclined only one way, and it is therefore quite a different thing from the conflict between reason and passion, with which it has been confounded.

My anxiety increasing, I daily groaned to thee, frequented thy church as often as I had leasure from those employments, under the weight of which I groaned. Alypius was with me during his vacation from the law, which was his practice, as rhetoric was mine. Our other friend Nebridius was gone to assist Verecundus at Milan in teaching grammar, who studiously avoided attendance upon the great, that he might command leisure to improve his mind. On a certain day, Politian, an African, one of our townsmen, came to visit me and Alypius. We sat down to converse, and upon the play-table which was before us, he saw a book, opened it, and found it to be the apostle Paul, to his great surprise; for he supposed it to have been a book relating to my profession. He, though a soldier at court, was a devout person, and congratulated me on my taste. On my informing him how earnestly I studied those epistles, he gave me an account of Antony the Egyptian monk, a character to that hour unknown to us; he informed us also of a number of monasteries, of which we knew nothing. There was even a monastery at Milan under the care of Ambrose at that time, of which we had not heard.[*] When he had given a narration also of two of his companions, who suddenly gave themselves up to God in the same way, and forsook the world, I felt myself confounded. About twelve years had now elapsed from the nineteenth year of my life, when I read Cicero's Hortensius, to this time, since I had begun to seek wisdom, and I was yet at a distance from joy. In the entrance on youth, I had prayed for chastity, and had said, "Give me chastity and continence, but grant not my request immediately." For I was afraid, lest thou shouldest quickly hear my prayer, and heal this distemper of concupiscence, which I wished rather to be fully gratified than extinguished. And I had gone on perversely in depraved superstition, with a heart at enmity against thy truth, and had deferred from day to day to devote myself to thee, under the pretence that I was uncertain where the truth lay. Now that it was certain, I was still a slave, and "I hear of others, who have not studied ten or twelve years, as I have done, and who, notwithstanding have given themselves up to God." Such were my thoughts. What pains did I not take to spur my reluctant spirit! my arguments were spent, a silent trepidation remained, and I dreaded deliverance itself as death. "What is this, said I to Alypius, which you have heard? Illiterate men rise and seize Heaven, while we with all our learning, are rolling in the filth of sin. In the agitation of my spirit I retired into the garden belonging to the house, knowing how evil I was, but ignorant of the good thou hadst in store for me. Alypius followed me, and we sat remote from the house, and with vehement indignation I rebuked my sinful spirit, because it would not give itself up to God. I found I wanted a will. Still was I held, and thou, in secret, wast urgent upon me with severe mercy. Vanities of vanities, my old friends, shook my vesture of flesh, and whispered, are we to

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‡ Ephesians v.

[*] Should the serious reader find himself inclined to blame this monastic taste, I agree with him; but let the principle have its just praise; it originated in a desire of freedom from the temptations of the world; and let professors of godliness observe, how much the excessive indulgence of the commercial spirit prevents their own progress in our times.

part? and for ever? The evil suggestions which I felt, may thy mercy avert from the soul of thy servant! Canst thou live without us? it was said; but with less and less power? Canst not thou, on the other hand, it was suggested, do what those and these have done, not in themselves, but in the strength of the Lord?—Throw thyself on him, fear not, he will not suffer thee to fall. Turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of the flesh; they speak of pleasure, but not as the law of thy God. Such was my internal controversy. When deep meditation had collected all my misery into the view of my heart, a great storm arose producing a large shower of tears. To give it vent, I rose up hastily from Alypius. The sound of my voice appeared pregnant with weeping, and he remained motionless in the same place. I prostrated myself under a fig-tree, and with tears bursting out, I spake to this effect: How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? remember not my old iniquities. For I perceived myself entangled by them. How long shall I say to-morrow? why should not this hour put an end to my slavery? Thus I spake and wept in the bitterness of my soul, and I heard a voice as from a neighboring house of one repeating frequently, "take up and read, take up and read." I paused, and began to think, whether I ever had heard boys use such a speech in any play, and could recollect nothing like it. I then concluded, that I was ordered from heaven, to take up the book, and read the first sentence I cast mine eyes upon. I returned hastily to the place, where Alypius was sitting; for there I had placed the book of St. Paul's Epistles. I seized it, opened, and read what first struck my eyes; "not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Nor did I choose to read any thing more, nor had I occasion. Immediately at the end of this sentence, all my doubts vanished. I closed the book, and with a tranquil countenance gave it to Alypius. He begged to see what I had read, I showed him it, and he read still further.* Him that is weak in the faith receive ye; which he applied to himself, as he told me. With a placid serenity and composure suitable to his character, in which he far excelled me, he joined with me in going to my mother, who now triumphed in the abundant answers given to her petitions. Thus didst thou turn her mourning into joy.

BOOK IX.

O Lord, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my bonds in sunder.—Let my heart and tongue, and all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto thee? and do thou answer me, and say to my soul, I am thy salvation. Who and what am I? what evil am I not? Was it my will, or words, or deeds, that have done it? No; but thou Lord, good and merciful, and thy right hand looking at the depth of my death, and exhausting the abyss of corruption from the bottom of my heart. The whole of my evil lay in a will, stubbornly set in opposition to thine.—But where lay of old time, and from what deep secret was my free-will called out in a moment, by which I bowed my neck to thy easy yoke, and my shoulders to thy light burden, Christ Jesus, my helper and Redeemer? How sweet was it in a moment to be free from those delightful vanities, to lose which had been my dread, to part with which was now my joy! Thou ejectedst them, O my true and consummate Delight, and thou enteredst in their room, O sweeter than all pleasure, but not to flesh and blood; clearer than all light, but to the inner man; higher than all honour, but not to those who are high in their own eyes.—Now was my mind set free from the corroding cares of avarice, and ambition, and lust, and I communed in playful ease with thee, my Light, my Riches, my Saviour, and my God.

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* Rom. xiii. and xiv. beginning.

I determined in thy sight to give up my employments not abruptly, but gradually.* And opportunely the vintage vacation being at hand, I resolved to continue in my employment till that time. I was glad also, that I had an opportunity of saying to my scholars, what was true, that the care of my health, which had suffered much from fatigue, obliged me to cease from the laborious office of teaching. And to have given up the work before the vacation might have appeared arrogant and exposed me to the censure of vanity. But should any of thy servants think, that I did wrong in remaining in the chair of deceit a day longer, I will not contend. But hast not thou, most merciful Lord, washed away this, with all my other deadly sins, in the laver of regeneration?

Our friend Verecundus was seized with a distemper, and receiving baptism in the midst of it, departed this life in thy faith and fear. Not long after my conversion, my friend Nebridius also, though he had sunk into the error which takes away the proper manhood of thy Son, was recovered; and becoming a faithful christian, in Africa his own country, quitted this tabernacle of clay, and now lives in Abraham's bosom. He no more puts his ear to my mouth, but his spiritual mouth to thy fountain to receive as much wisdom as he is capable of—happy without end.

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* I would suggest four particular remarks on the narrative of our author's conversion. 1. That it does please God in every age to distinguish some of the works of his Holy Spirit by extraordinary circumstances. It is of little consequence, to debate whether the voice heard in the garden was miraculous or not, whether literally true, or an impression on his mind. Either way it was equally from God, and sheds a lustre on the conversion of a great and eminently holy personage, who was called to testify remarkably for God in his day. 2. There is generally some master-sin, which impedes the work of God in all his people; Augustine's was sensuality, and in the mortification of that master-sin the grace of God is peculiarly illustrated. 3. The great medium of deliverance always is, the written word of God testifying of Jesus, and salvation only by putting him on through faith. 4. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. In our weakness thoroughly felt God appears. Is it to be wondered, that the saint before us proved so strong and zealous a champion of the effectual grace of God, and was made use of to revive the clear doctrine of it in the church, and was trained up by his own experience to defend it against the subtilties of Pelagius? He who foresaw what Pelagius would introduce, in his adorable wisdom thus provided an experienced pastor of his church, who in due time should withstand his corruptions. But of this more hereafter.—

It is pleasant to me to remember and confess how thou didst teach me and my friend Alypius, in the country, where we enjoyed the affectionate and sedulous care of my mother. We were both in the capacity of catechumens, and I read with pleasure the Psalms of David. With what mingled pity and indignation did I look on the Manichees, who madly rejected the antidote of life. O that they saw the internal eternal life, which because I had tasted, I grieved, that I could not shew it to them.

The holidays being finished, I signified to my scholars, that they must provide themselves another teacher. And I wrote to Ambrose an account of my errors, and of my present desire; and begged him to recommend some part of thy word more particularly to my attention, as a proper preparative for baptism. He pointed out to me the prophet Isaiah, I apprehend, on account of his superior perspicuity in opening the gospel. However, finding the first part of this prophet more obscure, and apprehending the rest to be similar. I deferred the reading of him, till I was more experienced in the Scriptures. The time approaching in which I must give in my name, I left the country and returned to Milan. There I received baptism with Alypius and the boy Adeodatus, the fruit of my sin. He was almost fifteen years old, and, in understanding, he exceeded many learned men. I glorify thee for thy gifts, my God; for I had nothing in the boy but sin. For that I brought him up in thy religion, thou, and thou only inspiredst me. I looked with trembling at his prodigious genius. But thou soon removedst him from the earth, and I remember him with greater satisfaction, as I have now no anxiety for his childhood, his youth, or his manhood. Nor could I at that time be satisfied with contemplating the mystery of redemption. The hymns and songs of thy church moved my soul intensely; thy truth was distilled by them into my heart; the flame of piety was kindled, and my tears flowed for joy. This practice of singing had been of no long standing at Milan. It began about the year when Justina persecuted Ambrose.—

The pious people watched in the church, prepared to die with their pastor. There my mother sustained an eminent part in watching and praying. Then hymns and psalms after the manner of the east, were sung, with a view of preserving the people from weariness; and thence the custom has spread through christian churches.

Thou, who makest men to be of one mind in an house, unitedst to us one of our young townsmen, Euodius, who had served in the army, and was now regenerated. We determined to return to Africa, and when we were at the mouth of the Tiber, my mother departed this life. I must not pass by the conceptions of my soul concerning her, who endured labor for my temporal birth, and labored in heart for my spiritual birth. She had been brought up in a christian family, but did not so much commend her mother's care, as that of a decrepid old servant of the house, who had nursed her father, whose years and character were highly respected, and who superintended the education of her master's daughters. She never suffered them to drink even water, except at meals, telling them, that if ever they became mistresses, the custom of drinking would remain, but they would then indulge it in wine, not water. Yet my mother Monica, notwithstanding the care of this provident governess, when young had learned by degrees to drink wine, having been sent to draw it for the use of the family. By what method was she delivered from this snare? Thou providest for her a malignant reproach from a maid of the house, who, in a passion, called her drunkard. From that moment she gave up the practice for ever. Thus didst thou prepare a cure for her evil practice, by the malevolent railing of another, that no man may attribute it to his own power, if his admonitions of another be attended with salutary effect.*

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* I could not prevail with myself to pass over altogether this, and a few more circumstances of domestic life, which follow. Let the piety and prudence, which they breathe, compensate for their simplicity. To a serious mind they will perhaps appear, not only not contemptible, but even also instructive.

After her marriage with my father Patricius, she endeavored to win him over to thy service by the amiableness of her manners, and patiently bore the injuries of his unfaithfulness. She still looked for thy mercy, that, learning to believe in thee, he might become chaste. His temper was passionate, but his spirit benevolent. She knew how to bear with him when angry, by a perfect silence and composure; and when she saw him cool, would meekly expostulate with him. Many matrons in her company would complain of the blows and harsh treatment they received from their husbands, whose tempers were yet milder than that of Patricius; whom she would exhort to govern their tongues, and remember the inferiority of their condition. And when they expressed their astonishment that it was never heard that Patricius, a man of so violent a temper, had beaten his wife, or that they ever were at variance a single day, she informed them of her plan. Those, who followed it, thanked her for the good success of it; those who did not, experienced vexation. Her mother-in-law, at first was irritated against her by the whispers of servants. But she overcame her by mild obsequiousness, insomuch that she at length informed her son of the slanders of those backbiters, and desired that they might be restrained. Thus she and her mother-in-law lived in perfect harmony. It was a great gift, which, O my God, thou gavest to her, that she never repeated any of the fierce things, which she heard from persons who were at variance with one another, and was conscientiously exact, in saying nothing but what might tend to heal and to reconcile.

I might have been tempted to think this a small good, had I not known by grievous experience the innumerable evils resulting to society from the contrary spirit by which men extend mischief like a pestilence, not only repeating the words of angry enemies, to angry enemies, but also adding what never had been said; whereas the human mind should not be content with negative goodness in such cases, but should endeavor to promote peace by speaking what is good, as my amiable mother did, through the effectual teaching of thy Spirit. At length, in the extremity of life, she gained her husband to thee, and he died in the faith of Christ.

It was through thy secret appointment, that she and I stood alone at a window facing the east, in a house at the mouth of the Tiber, where we were preparing ourselves for our voyage. Our discourse was highly agreeable, and forgetting the past, we endeavored to conceive aright the nature of the eternal life of the saints. It was evident to us, that no carnal delights deserve to be named on this subject; erecting our spirits more ardently, we ascended above the noblest parts of the material creation to the consideration of our own minds, and passing above them, we attempted to reach heaven itself, to come to thee, by whom all things were made. There our hearts were enamored, and there we held fast the first fruits of the Spirit, and returned to the sound of our own voice, which gave us an emblem of the divine Word. We said, if a man should find the flesh, the imagination, and every tongue to be silent, all having confessed their Maker, and afterwards holding their peace, and if he should now apply his ear to him who made them, and God alone should speak, not by any emblems or created things, but by himself, so that we could hear his word, should this be continued, and other visions be withdrawn, and this alone, seize and absorb the spectator forever, is not this the meaning of, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"* At that moment the world appeared to us of no value: and she said, Son, I have now no delight in life. What I should do here and why I am here I know not, the hope of this life being quite spent. One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in larger measure. What do I here?—Scarce five days after, she fell into a fever. A brother of mine who was with us lamented, that she was likely to die in a foreign land. She looked at him with anxiety to see him so groveling in his conceptions, and then looking at me, said, Place this body any where; do not distress yourselves concerning it. I could not but rejoice and give thee thanks, that she was delivered from that anxiety, with which I knew she always had been agitated in regard to a sepulchre which she had provided for herself, and prepared near the body of her husband. I knew not the time, when by the fulness of thy grace, she had been rid of this emptiness, but I rejoiced to find this evidence of it.—I heard afterwards, that while we were at Ostia she had discoursed with some friends in my absence concerning the contempt of life, and they, expressing their surprise that she did not fear to leave her body so far from her own country; nothing, said she, is far to God, and I do not fear, that he should not know where to find me at the resurrection. She departed this life on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, and the thirty-third of mine.*

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* Matthew xxv. In Rev. xxi. 23, the same sublime thought is described under the medium of sight which here is conveyed under the medium of hearing.

BOOK X.

Now Lord, my groaning testifies that I am displeased with myself; but thou art light and pleasure, and art loved and desired, that I may blush for myself, and throw away myself, and choose thee; and neither attempt to please thee, nor myself, but by depending on thee. For when I am wicked, this is nothing else, but to confess that I am displeased with myself; and when godly, this is nothing else, but to confess that thou affordest that gift to me. The confessions of my past evils, which thou hast forgiven, changing my mind by faith and thy baptism, when they are read and heard, excite the heart, that it sink not in despair, but may watch in the love of thy mercy, and the sweetness of thy grace, by which the weak is made strong, who, by it, is brought to feel his own weakness. But what advantage will result from my confessing, as I now propose, not what I was, but what I now am? I will discover myself to such as will rejoice over me for what is good, and will pray for and sympathize with me in regard to what is evil, more secure as I am, through thy mercy than my innocence. I am a little child, but my father always lives, and is my sufficient guardian. What temptations I can or cannot resist, I know not. But my hope is this, that thou art faithful, that thou dost not suffer us to be tempted, above that we are able, but with the temptation also makest a way to escape; that we may be able to bear it.* Lord, I love thee; thou hast smitten my heart with thy word, and I have loved thee. But what do I love, when I love thee? not the heavens and the earth, nor any created beauty. They cry aloud, we are not God, he made us. Where shall I find thee, but in thyself above me? Too late did I love thee, thou PRIMEVAL Beauty.— Thou calledst aloud, and overcamest my deafness. Thou shonest and dispelledst my darkness. Thou wast fragrant, and I panted after thee. I tasted, and hungered and thirsted after thee: thou touchedst me, and I was inflamed into thy peace. When I shall stick wholly to thee, I shall no more have pain and fatigue, and my whole life shall live full of thee. But now because thou supportest him whom thou fillest, because I am not full of thee, I am a burden to myself. My wholesome griefs and pernicious pleasures contend together, and I know not on which side the victory stands. Woe is me! Thou art my physician, I am sick. Thou art merciful, I am wretched. All my hope lies in thy immense mercy. Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. Thou commandest us to keep from the lust of the flesh, from the lust of the eyes, and from the pride of life. And what thou commandest, thou hast given me. Yet there still live in my memory the images of evils, to which I had been habituated, and they occur to me even in sleep. Is not thy hand, O God, able to heal all the diseases of my soul, and to sanctify even the hours of rest?† I would rejoice with trembling in what thou hast given me, and mourn over that which is imperfect, and hope that thou wilt perfect thy mercies, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

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* In what follows to the end of this book, the author gives a very amiable picture of the filial affections, tempered by piety and resignation, which he felt on this occasion, not indeed without a mixture of the superstition of praying for the dead, which was growing in this century. In him the evangelical spirit, however, predominates extremely, even while he is indulging the superstitious. But let it suffice to have given this general account.

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* 1 Cor. x.

There is another evil of the day, and I wish the day may be sufficient for it. We refresh the continual ruins of the body by food, till this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Thou hast taught me to use aliment as medicine. But while I am passing from the uneasiness of hunger to the rest of satiety; in the very passage the snare of concupiscence is laid for me; and the bounds of innocence are not easily defined, and a pretence for indulgence is made on that very account. These temptations I daily endeavor to resist, and I call on thy right hand for my salvation, and make known to thee my agitations of soul, because I am not yet clear on this subject. I hear my God, "let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness."*—The latter is far from me, let it not approach me; the former sometimes steals upon me, keep it at a distance from me. Who is there, Lord, that is perfectly temperate? Whoever he be, let him magnify thy name.—But I am not he, I am a sinful man. However I magnify thy name, and he who overcame the world, and numbers me among the weak members of his body intercedes for my sins.

In regard to the enticement of smells, I am not solicitous. When they are absent, I want them not; when present I do not refuse them, content to be without them entirely. So I think; but such is my miserable darkness, that I must not easily credit myself because, what is within, generally lies hid, till experience evidence it. The only hope, the only confidence, the only firm promise is thy mercy.

The pleasures of the ear have deeper hold on me. I find, even while I am charmed with sacred melody, I am led astray at times by the luxury of sensations, and

† The Christian desires his hours of sleep to be all devoted to the glory of God.

* Luke xxi.

offend, not knowing at the time, but afterwards I discover it. Sometimes guarding against this fallacy, I err in the other extreme, and could wish all the melody of David's psalms were removed from my ears and those of the church, and think it safer to imitate the plan of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who directed a method of repeating the Psalms, more resembling pronunciation than music. But when I remember my tears of affection at my conversion under the melody of thy church, with which I am still affected, I again acknowledge the utility of the custom. Thus do I fluctuate between the danger of pleasure, and the experience of utility, and am more induced, though with a wavering assent, to own that the infirmity of nature may be assisted in devotion by psalmody. Yet when the tune has moved me more than the subject, I feel guilty and am ready to wish I had not heard the music.* See where I am, and mourn with me, ye who are conscious of any inward feelings of godliness. I cannot expect the sympathy of those who are not.—Thou, Lord my God, hear, and pity, and heal me.

The pleasures of the eye I find to entangle me from time to time. But thou deliverest me, sometimes without pain, because I fall into them gently; at other times with pain, because I stick in them.

Another form of manifold danger is added, a curious spirit, palliated by the name of knowledge. Surrounded as we are with objects, when can I say I am freed from this? What vehement temptations have I had from the enemy to ask of thee a sign? But I beseech thee by our king Jesus Christ, that, as I am far from consenting to it, so I may be farther and farther. What a trifle diverts me from a thought of great importance, and unless thou quickly admonish me by the conviction of my infirmity, either to divert the thought by some serious meditation, or to despise it altogether, I should become absolutely dull. My life is full of these evils, and even my prayers are often disturbed, and while I apply my heart to thine ears, I am overborne by a torrent of vanities.

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* All who attend to sacred psalmody, may learn from this, the importance of watching their hearts, and of attending closely to the truths brought into view in the sacred song.

What can give hope except thy mercy, by which thou hast begun to renew us? And thou knowest how much thou hast done for me already. I carry thy yoke, and find it easy, as thou hast promised. It always was so, but I did not believe it, when I was afraid to take it upon me: but can I, O Lord, who alone rulest without pride because thou hast no superior, can I in this life be exempt from pride? Well done, well done, I find scattered in the nets by the enemy every where. Daily, Lord, we feel these temptations. Thou knowest on this head, the groans of my heart, and the floods of mine eyes. Nor can I easily see, that I grow more free from this pest of pride; and I much fear my secret evils, which thou knowest. I am poor and needy, and my best method is to seek thy mercy in secret groans and self abhorrence, till thou perfect that which concerneth me.

There is another internal evil, by which a man, without seeking to please others, pleases himself with thy good things, as if they were his own; or if he allows them to be thine, yet he is apt to fancy them bestowed upon him for his own merits; or he pleases himself with indulging an invidious spirit against others. In all these dangers thou seest the trembling of my heart; I feel my wounds healed every now and then by thee; but I feel not an exemption from them.—Sometimes thou introducest me into an uncommon affection, into a sweetness past the power of description, which, were it perfected in me, I should not see what life would want to complete its felicity. But I sink back by the weight of misery, and am held entangled.

Whom shall I look to as my mediator? Shall I go to angels? Many have tried this, and have been fond of visions, and have deserved to be the sport of the illusions which they loved. A mediator between God and man must have the nature of both. The true mediator, whom in thy secret mercy thou hast shewn to the humble, and hast sent, that by his example they might also learn humility, the man Christ Jesus hath appeared a mediator between mortal sinners and the immortal Holy One, that, because the wages of righteousness is life and peace; by his divine righteousness he might justify the ungodly, and deliver them from death. He was shewn to ancient saints, that they might be saved by faith in his future sufferings as we by faith in the same sufferings already past.—How hast thou loved us, Father, delivering up thy only Son for us ungodly? For whom he, our priest and sacrifice, who thought it no robbery to be equal with thee, was subjected to death. Well may my hope be strong through such an Intercessor; else, I should despair. Many and great are my diseases, thy medicine larger still. Were he not made flesh for us, we could not dream of having any union with him. Terrified with my sins and the weight of my misery, I was desponding, but thou encouragedst me, saying, Christ died for all, that they which live should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them.[*] Lo, I cast all my care on thee, Lord, that I may live. Thou knowest my weakness and ignorance, teach and heal me. He hath redeemed me with his blood, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—Let not the proud calumniate me, if with the poor I desire to eat and be satisfied, and to praise the Lord.[†]

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Augustine, after his conversion, returned with some friends into Africa, and lived upon his own estate for almost three years, retired from the world. A desire to oblige a person of some consequence in Hippo, who requested his instructions, brought him at length to that city, where Valerius was bishop,—a person of great piety; but, on account of his slender acquaintance with the Latin tongue, scarce adequate to the office of pastor in that place. Augustine, through the strong and urgent desires of the people, was ordained presbyter to Valerius; but wept on the occasion from the genuine sense which he had of the importance of the office. He told Possidius that his tears were by some misconstrued,* as if he regretted that he had not been chosen bishop. Such poor judges are many, of the views and sensations of godly men! Valerius rejoiced that God had heard his prayers, and that the people would now be supplied with such a pastor. He gave him licence to preach in the presence of the bishop, a thing before unknown in Africa; but which, from the good effects of this precedent, afterwards grew common. Here his ministry was useful in the instruction and edification of the brethren, and also in the defeat of various heresies. Divine truth, which had been almost buried amidst many schisms and distractions in Africa, now raised up its head again; and Fortunatus, the great leader of the Manichees, was obliged, in confusion, to leave Hippo, when he found himself, by the confession of the hearers, vanquished in a conference with Augustine.

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[*] 2 Corinthians v.

[‡] Psalm xxii. 26. We see in this last book the author's description of the conflict between flesh and spirit after his conversion, and the repose of his soul for peace and happiness only on the Lord Jesus as his righteousness and strength. I shall make no farther remarks than to repeat his own observation in his retractions. "These Confessions praise the God of righteousness and goodness, and excite the human understanding and affection toward him. They did this in me while I was writing them, and they do it still when I read them. What others may think of them let them judge; but I know they have much pleased and do please many of the brethren."

Heretics vied with the members of the general church in their attention to the pastoral labors of Augustine, whose fame began gradually to spread throughout the western world. Valerius rejoiced and gave thanks on the account, and being solicitous to preserve such a treasure to his church, he took care to get Augustine elected bishop of Hippo, in conjunction with himself. Age and infirmities rendered Valerius very inadequate to the work; and every true christian will doubt which more to admire, the godly zeal of Augustine, tempered with modesty and charity, or the unfeigned humility of Valerius. Augustine, after he had strongly resisted the inclinations of the bishop and all the church, at length accepted the office; the duties of which he continued to discharge after the decease of Valerius. His zeal and assiduity increased with his authority. The monastery of his institution became renowned in Africa; and about ten bishops, of undoubted piety, known to our author,* came from this seminary. These instituted monasteries after the same pattern, and from them other churches were supplied with pastors; and the doctrines of faith, hope, and charity, by these means, and also by Augustine's writings, which were translated into the Greek tongue, were diffused and enforced with increasing vigor through the christian world. His writings, however, never seem to have had any permanent influence in the eastern church.

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* Possid. Life of Aug.

CHAPTER III.

The Pelagian Controversy.

AT a time when the influence of the Holy Spirit was faintly experienced, and superstition and licentiousness were rapidly increasing, satan felt himself emboldened to raise a new heresy, which should pretend to purity, in perfection, resulting from the excellence of MERE HUMAN NATURE, without the agency of divine grace. This was Pelagianism: an heresy which derived its name from Pelagius, a monk, who decried the doctrine of the *original corruption of human nature, and the necessity of Divine grace to enlighten the understanding and purify the heart*, because they were prejudicial to the progress of holiness and virtue, and tending to establish mankind in a presumptuous and fatal security. He taught that we derive no corruption from the fall of our *first parents*, but are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came from the forming hand of his Creator; that mankind are capable of repentance and amendment, and of arriving at the highest degrees of piety and virtue by the use of their natural powers and faculties; that indeed *external grace* is necessary to excite their endeavors, but that they have no need of the internal succours of the Divine Spirit; that Adam was by nature mortal; and certainly would have died, if he had not sinned; that the grace of God is given in proportion to our merits; that mankind may arrive at a state of perfection in this life; and that the law qualified men for the kingdom of heaven, and was founded upon equal promises with the gospel.

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*Possid.

Pelagius was born in Britain. His companion, and coadjutor in heresy, was Cœlestius an Irishman.—They were both laymen, and as far as appears, always maintained characters of fair and decent morals.—They were both men of genius and capacity of the first rank. The heretical opinions of Pelagius did not appear till he was far advanced in life; before that time, his reputation for serious piety was great in the christian world. Those who know the difference between real holiness and the semblance of it in *mere morality* will not be surprized at this.

To counteract this heresy, Augustine, of Hippo, had been trained up under the Lord's wholesome discipline, by an extraordinary conversion. In this way God made use of this heresy as an occasion of introducing more just views of gospel grace, than had for a long time obtained in the church, and of reviving christian truth, humility and piety.

Pelagius used to deliver his heretical principles under the modest appearance of queries, started against the doctrines of the church, and those as not invented by himself but by others. This was an artful and powerful method to poison the minds of men. Also with consummate artifice he insinuated himself into the favor of women of some rank, of weak minds, and unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel, though professing religion; and by their means, he diffused his tenets with much success. Cœlestius, more daring and open in speech, pursued a method not so replete with deceit, and was therefore exposed to detection more easily than his master. He was condemned, by a synod, at Carthage, as an heretic, in the year 412, and his hopes of rising in the church, were hereby disappointed. At this synod, when Cœlestius was asked whether he had not asserted, that infants are born in the state in which Adam was before transgression; all that could be obtained from him was, "that infants needed baptism, and ought to be baptized."

The Pelagian controversy was a dispute between holy men and mere men of the world; between grace and human merit, between the spirit and doctrine of an humble publican, and that of a self-righteous pharisee.

It appears, from well authenticated facts, that after Pelagius had travelled through the Roman empire, and had, in vain, attempted to overturn the doctrines of grace, he retired to his own native country. But nothing certain is to be known further either concerning him or Cœlestius.

CHAPTER IV.

Augustine's Conduct toward the Donatists—His death.

THE active spirit of the bishop of Hippo found much employment in his long course of private and public labors against the Pelagians, the Manichees and the Donatists, besides the general care of the African churches, and the peculiar inspection of his own diocese. The two former sects he in a manner eradicated. The last he opposed with much success.

Some of the Donatists were, comparatively speaking, a mild and peaceable people; but this was not the case with those who were called Circumcelliones.—These were a mere banditti, sons of violence and bloodshed, who neither valued their own lives nor those of their neighbors, and frequently were remarkable for committing suicide in a fit of frenzy. They had a peculiar malice against the pastors of the general church, and from time to time, way-laid them, attacked them with armed force, and mutilated, or even killed them. They burnt the houses of those who would not comply with their sentiments, and were guilty of many detestable enormities. By these miserable men, Augustine was, several times, way-laid, and narrowly escaped. By him many of this banditti, were, however, brought, with much humility and joy to confess their error, and to return to the bosom of the church with every mark of serious repentance.

After a life of great activity for the good of souls, and many sore trials, Augustine was seized with a fever, which ended in his dissolution, in the year 430. He lived 76 years, 40 of which he had been a presbyter or bishop. He used to say, that a christian should never cease to repent, even to the hour of his death.—He had David's penitential Psalms inscribed on the wall in his last sickness, and he read and wept abundantly. For ten days before he expired, he desired to be uninterrupted, that he might give himself wholly to devotion, except at certain intervals. He had preached the word of God constantly, till his last sickness.—He left no will, having neither money nor lands to bequeath. His library he left to the church. Of his own relations, he had previously taken adequate care.

CHAPTER V.

The Theology of Augustine.

BY the irruption of the Vandals, the Roman empire was on all sides dissolving, at the time of Augustine's death; and its fairest provinces in Africa, fell into the hands of the barbarians—But the light which, through his means, had been kindled, was not extinct; for, as it depended not on the grandeur of the Roman empire, so neither was it extinguished by its decline.

For more than a thousand years the light of Divine truth, which here and there shone in individuals, during the dreary night of superstition, was nourished by the writings of Augustine, which next to the sacred scriptures, were the guides of men who feared God.

The doctrine of justification, however, he did not clearly understand, and a precise and clear exhibition of it is not to be found in his writings. Still he knew what faith in the Redeemer meant: and those parts of the scripture, which speak of the forgiveness of sins, he understood, felt and loved.

While, to trust in ourselves, was the avowed boast of all the philosophers, and they were expecting virtue and every internal excellence, only from themselves; Augustine, by his own experience, felt human insufficiency completely, and knew that in himself dwelt no good thing. Hence was he admirably prepared to describe the total depravity and apostacy of human nature, and what he knew to be true he faithfully describes. Feeling himself to have been *changed* entirely by effectual grace, he came fully to acquiesce in St. Paul's views of predestination. This, with him, was a doctrine, which followed experimental religion, as a shadow follows the substance.

His theology was practical. He preached the doctrines of grace with design to exalt God and humble the creature. He taught men what it is to be humble before God. Practical godliness was his theme, and he constantly connected all his views of grace with humility. He taught in opposition to the Pelagian notion of sinless perfection, that the most humble and the most holy, have, through life, to combat with indwelling sin. He greatly delighted in the practical subjects of charity and heavenly-mindedness. These, from his first conversion, influenced all his conduct. In his writings, no pride, no self-conceit, no bitterness, ever discovered themselves in any expression.

Finally, in ethics he is superior. On the subject of veracity and faithfulness to oaths, and in general, in the practice of justice, in the love of mercy, and in walking humbly with God, as he wrote most admirably, so he practised most sincerely; and by his writings and practice, he exhorted others to be of the same judgment and of the same practice with himself, as to the great things of religion.

CHAPTER VI.

Jerom.

THIS renowned monk was born at Stridon, near Dalmatia, under the emperor Constantine, in the year 331. Great care was early taken to give him a good education. He was brought up under religious instruction from his infancy. After his baptism, at Rome, he travelled into France, and examined libraries, collecting information from all quarters. On his return to his own country, he determined to follow the profession of a monk, a term then implying a private recluse christian, a life suited to gratify his studious disposition. He was, however, made a presbyter of the church, but never would proceed any further in ecclesiastical dignity. He spent four years in the deserts of Syria, reading and studying with immense industry. Here, by the assistance of a Jew, who visited him, Nicodemus-like, in the evenings, lest he should give umbrage to his brethren, he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and with indefatigable labor, studied also the Chaldee and the Syriac. After this he visited Rome, where he encouraged a monastic life, and had many admirers. But unjust aspersions having been cast on his character, with disgust he left Rome, and went into the East. Several of his admirers followed him. Having chosen Bethlehem as the seat of his old age, and having erected four monasteries, three for women, and one for men, he there spent the rest of his life, enjoying at times the society of his learned friends. In the year 422, he died in the ninety first year of his age. His knowledge of theology was limited. He did not understand the true gospel-mystery of mortifying sin, and by his voluntary humility, and neglect of the body, and by the splendor of his ill-digested learning, contributed more than any other person of antiquity to the growth of superstition. But notwithstanding this he appears to have had some devout and just views of the character and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

The Church of Christ in the West.

IT is time to resume the connected thread of history. But the reader must not expect a successive detail of the proceedings of the Roman princes.

After the death of Theodosius, the empire was torn by various convulsions, tending particularly in the West, to its destruction. Let us regard only the real church amid these scenes. She lived, while the secular glory of Rome was destroyed. Honorius, the son of Theodosius, reigned there, while his brother Arcadius governed at Constantinople.

Honorius, being a weak prince, governed by his ministers, protected the external state of the church, extirpated the remains of idolatry, and supported orthodoxy. The superior advantages of a christian, above a pagan establishment, even in times of great religious declension appear in the humanity of a number of laws, and edicts, by which idolatrous impurities and savage games were abolished, and in the care taken of the needy and miserable. In what, for instance, but a christian government, shall we find so humane a law as that of Honorius, by which judges are directed to take prisoners out of prison every Sunday, and to enquire if they be provided with necessaries, and to see that they are properly accommodated in all things?

Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, was one of the greatest ornaments of Gaul in this century. He was a person of quality, and exercised the profession of a counsellor in the former part of his life. Amator, his predecessor in the see, perceived some evidences of piety in him, and ordained him deacon. A month after the decease of Amator, Germanus was unanimously elected bishop by the clergy, nobility, citizens, and peasants, and was forced, notwithstanding he manifested the greatest reluctance, to accept the office. He employed himself in founding monasteries, and in enriching the church, while he impoverished himself, and for 30 years, from his ordination to his death, lived in extreme austerity.

About the year 430, Germanus visited the island of Great Britain, to oppose Agricola, who was there propagating the Pelagian heresy among the churches in that country. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, accompanied Germanus in this mission, which was undertaken at the request of a numerous council in Gaul. Lupus governed his church 52 years, and was highly renowned for sanctity. These two bishops, on their arrival, preached not only in the churches, but also in the highways, and in the open country, and vast crowds attended their ministry. The Pelagians came to a conference. The bishops supported the doctrines of grace, by express passages of scripture, and Pelagianism was reduced to silence.

At this time, the Picts, a race of barbarians who inhabited the North, and the Saxons, a German nation, called in by the Britons, as it is well known, to assist them against the Picts, united their forces against the natives. The latter terrified at the approach of the enemy, had recourse to Germanus and Lupus. Many, having been instructed by them, desired baptism, and a great part of the army received it, in a church made of boughs of trees twisted together. When this was done, they marched against the enemy, with Germanus at their head. He, having posted his men in a valley where the enemy were to pass, surprised and defeated them. After this, the two bishops returned to the continent. Palladius having been ordained bishop of Scotland, arrived there in the year 431. Scotland had never before seen a bishop, and was in a state of extreme barbarism.

While the doctrines of grace were defended in Britain with some hopeful, saving efficacy, the doctrine of semi-pelagianism in Gaul still maintained its ground, and Prosper and Hilary stood in defence of the orthodox principles. Cœlestine of Rome, where the spark of truth was still alive, amidst the mass of corruption which infested the western church vigorously supported the same cause. Cœlestine, in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, labored to prove, that all men are by nature, under the power of sin, by reason of the fall, from which nothing but grace can deliver any man—that man is not good of himself; he needs a communication to him from God—nor can a man, though renewed, overcome the flesh and the devil, except he receive daily assistance—that God so worketh upon the hearts of men, that holy thoughts, pious intentions, and the least motion toward a good intention, proceed from God. The grace of God does not take away free-will, but delivers, enlightens, rectifies and heals it. Thus was the truth supported at Rome, amidst the abounding superstitions.

Palladius, the pastor of Scotland, being dead, Cœlestine sent Patrick, a native of that country, in his stead. Patrick, having been carried captive into Ireland, where he learnt the customs of the country, was by some pirates afterward carried into Gaul; but after various adventures, he returned, a volunteer into Ireland, to attempt the conversion of the barbarous natives, who seem, till that time, to have been without any acquaintance with christianity. The uncivilized Irish refused at first to hear him. He went to Gaul, had an interview with Germanus, of Auxerre, and his mind was enflamed with fresh zeal—He then visited Rome, had an interview with Cœlestine, from whom he received such support and assistance that he revisited Ireland, where his success was, at length, so great, that to this day, he is looked on as the apostle of the Irish. By him they were first taught the use of letters; and from him they unquestionably recieved much instruction, both with respect to the duties of this life, and the preparations necessary for happiness in a future existence. Patrick died about the year 460, at an advanced age.

Semi-pelagianism strongly recommends itself to the depraved hearts of mankind; it divides the work of salvation between free grace and human ability in such a manner that it both retains a specious appearance of humility toward God, and at the same time flatters the pride of the human heart. The clergy of Marseilles, with Cassian at their head, very warmly supported this doctrine. Prosper, and Marius Mercator, with the arms of scripture did their utmost to withstand and prevent the spread of this doctrine, so pleasing to the carnal mind. Gaul, and the neighboring countries, no doubt received great benefit from their endeavors. Semi-pelagianism was so far checked, that during the dark ages, after this time, the doctrines of grace were cordially received by godly persons, particularly in the monasteries. All who were thoroughly humbled, and contrite, found the comfort of them; while those monks, whose religion was pharisaic, found the Semi-pelagian scheme to suit their self-righteous pride, and as the times grew more corrupt, semi-pelagianism gained the ascendency.

About the year 439, Genseric, king of the Vandals, an Arian by profession, surprized Carthage, in the midst of peace, and used his victory with great cruelty. The same unprincipled wickedness, which had ever characterized the Arian party, shewed itself in Genseric, especially in his malice toward the clergy; a number of these he drove from the churches, and put to death many of them.

The abominations of the times seemed to call for such a scourge. But the light of Divine grace revived in the West, purified many souls, and fitted them for sufferings. It was not so with all. With the majority, both superstition and practical wickedness increased. Carthage itself was sunk in vice; lewdness was amazingly predominant. So deplorable a thing it is for men to depart from the simplicity of christian faith! The superstition now increasing daily, only fortified them the more in self-righteousness; and natural depravity was exhibited in deeds of the boldest and most atrocious wickedness. Oppression and cruelty domineered at Carthage; and the poor, in the anguish of their misery, were induced to beseech God to deliver the city to the barbarians. But these were only christians in name. They were in reality very idolatrous in their practices, and even amidst the horrors of war and public calamities, continued impure and voluptuous. Oppression and injustice were so grievous, that the dominion of the barbarians was really more tolerable than that of the Romans. By this we see the adorable providence of God, in punishing the wickedness of nominal christians, not only at Carthage, but in general in this century through the Western empire. What happened to the ancient Jewish church, when grown wicked and idolatrous, and retaining only the form of religion, happens also to christian nations. God is glorified by taking the power out of their hand, that they may no longer profane his holy name.

Genseric expelled the bishops from their sees, and where they made any resistance, he made them slaves for life. Arians were then put in possession of the vacant sees. Some who were expelled, and still remained in the provinces, presented themselves before Genseric, and entreated, that as they had lost their churches and their wealth, they might, at least, be allowed to remain without molestation in Africa, for the comfort and support of the people of God. The stern barbarian replied, "I have resolved to leave none of your name or nation." It was with difficulty, he was withheld by the entreaties of those about him, from ordering them to be thrown into the sea.

In the year 443, Genseric passed over into Sicily, and so far as his arms prevailed, extended the persecution of the church into that island.

In the year 446, Germanus of Auxerre, was called to Great Britain, a second time, to withstand the Pelagian heresy, which was there again spreading its baneful influence. In this way God baffled the attempts of those who disturbed the faith of the Britons. Germanus died in the year 448, having held the see of Auxerre 30 years.

In the year 454, Genseric, with his Vandals, arrived at Rome, which he found defenceless: Leo went out to meet him, and persuaded him to be content with the pillage, and to abstain from burnings and murders. Genseric returned into Africa with many thousand captives. This circumstance gave occasion to an exercise of the christian grace of charity, in Deogratias, bishop of Carthage, who undertook to redeem those captives by the sale of all the vessels of gold and silver belonging to the churches under his care. He placed the captives in two great churches, which he furnished with beds of straw, giving orders for their daily accommodation with all necessaries. He appointed physicians to attend the sick, and had nourishment distributed to them in his presence, by their directions. In the night he visited all their beds, giving himself up to this work, notwithstanding his age and infirmities.—Deogratias lived only three years in his bishopric, was endeared to the memory of the faithful by his virtues; and while Arians performed military exploits, and dealt in blood, he honored the real doctrines of the gospel by acts of meekness and charity. In this we trace the real church, and see the connexion of faith and practice in the followers of the Lamb. So much goodness was offensive to Genseric, who took care to suffer no more such bishops. The orthodox bishops in Africa were in process of time reduced to three.

Several godly persons, after a variety of hardships, came into the hands of Capsur, a Moorish king, a relation of Genseric. These being arrived at the desert where he lived, and having seen there a number of profane sacrifices, began by their discourse and manner of life to bring over the barbarians to the knowledge of God, and gained a great multitude in a country, where the name of Jesus had not yet been heard. Desirous to establish the gospel there, they sent deputies across the desert to a Roman city where there was a bishop. To them, the bishop sent ministers, who built a church, and baptized a great number of barbarians. When Genseric heard of these transactions he was greatly incensed at the zeal of these pious men and condemned them to death. The converted Moors bewailed themselves. To each of them the martyrs said, as they passed by to execution, "Brother pray for me. God has accomplished my desire; this is the way to the heavenly kingdom."

Genseric was a cruel tyrant, and a confirmed Arian. By his order, Valerian, bishop of Abbenza, above 80 years old, was driven alone from the city, and all persons were prohibited from lodging him in their houses. He lay naked a long time in the public road, exposed to the weather, and thus expired for the faith of the gospel.

Genseric afterwards ordered the great church of Carthage to be shut, and banished the ministers; and wherever his arms prevailed, he made the people of God feel his fury. At this time the northern barbarians had extended their victorious arms far and wide. Africa bowed under the yoke of the Vandals. Spain, with a great part of Gaul, was in subjection to the Goths. The Franks subjugated the other part of Gaul. The southern part of Great Britain was overpowered by the Saxons. These were idolaters, and the small remains of ancient Britons, christians by profession, retired into the inaccessible mountains of Wales. The poverty of the northern parts of the island, was their security. The Franks also were idolaters. The barbarians who ruled in other parts were Arians. Evaric, king of the Goths in Spain, forbad the ordination of bishops in the place of those deceased, and sent others into banishment. The churches fell into decay, and congregations seldom assembled. With the Western church in general, it was, indeed, a most gloomy time. The wrath of God was evidently poured on them for their long abuse of mercies enjoyed. But the church was not extinct. Some christians, through grace, possessed their souls in patience, and evinced that real religion though low and depressed still existed.

Genseric died in the year 477, and was succeeded by his eldest son Huneric. He began his reign with a mild aspect toward the faithful, and after an interval of 24 years, permitted them to ordain a bishop at Carthage, but under this condition, that the Arians at Constantinople should have the same liberty, which those of the general church had at Carthage. The people protested against the condition, and with good reason, because the power was out of their hands, and said, "we will not accept a bishop on such terms. Jesus Christ will govern the church, as he hath done hitherto." But Huneric disregarded the protestation; and Eugenius was elected bishop of Carthage.

All mankind soon bore witness to his virtues. Though the revenues of the church were in the hands of the Arians, yet large sums were every day brought to Eugenius, all which he faithfully distributed to the needy, reserving no more to himself than daily bread. The Arian bishops soon murmured, represented him as a dangerous preacher, and expostulated with Eugenius himself for suffering persons to hear him, who wore the Vandal habit, which at that time, appears to have been perfectly distinct from the Roman. "God's house," he replied, "is open to all, without respect to persons."

Huneric fearing that he should lose his Vandals, if they attended the preaching of Eugenius, and to please the court of Constantinople, began to show the ferocity of his disposition. He ordered guards to watch at the doors of the church, who, when they saw a man or woman in a Vandal habit, struck such persons with short staves, jagged and indented, which being twisted into the hair and drawn back with sudden violence, tore off both the hair and skin. By this means, many suffered severely; women, who had been thus treated, were led through the streets, with a crier going before, to exhibit them to the people.—The faithful remained firm. Those who belonged to Huneric's court could not be induced to receive Arianism. Them he deprived of their pensions, and sent to reap corn in the country. Having been educated like gentlemen, they saw their punishment was severe and reproachful, but bore the cross for the sake of HIM who gave himself for them.

Huneric, at first, ordered, that no one should hold any office, who was not an Arian. Afterward, he confiscated the possessions of the rejected orthodox, and banished their persons into Sicily and Sardinia.

Pastors and people, to the amount of 4976, were banished into the desert. Felix had been bishop 44 years, and by the palsy had lost his speech and even his understanding. The faithful implored Huneric that the old man might be allowed to end his days quietly at Carthage. Huneric, as if ambitious to outstrip the pagan emperors in persecution, said, "Let him be tied to wild oxen, and be so carried where I ordered." On which, they tied him across a mule like a stick of timber. These christian heroes were conducted to the two cities of Sicca and Lares, where the Moors were directed to receive and conduct them to the desert. They were at first confined in a prison, where their brethren were allowed to have access to them, to preach, and to administer the Lord's supper. Some young children were of the number, several of whom were tempted to receive Arian baptism; but *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings strength was ordained*, and they continued firm.

While in prison they underwent the severest trials from their close and crouded confinement; but true grace disposed them patiently to endure, rather than free themselves by unfaithfulness. The Moors at length ordered them to march. They went out on the Lord's day, their clothes, their heads, and their faces covered all over with filth, and as they went, sang; "*Such honor have all his saints.*" Cyprian, bishop of Uniziba, comforted them, and gave them all he had, wishing for the honor of being carried with them. This was not then granted him. Afterward he was confined, suffered much, and was sent into banishment. There is a voice in man which speaks loudly in favor of suffering innocence. The whole country resounded with the cries and groans of the people flocking to behold them, and throwing their children at their feet. "Alas," said they, "to whom do you leave us? who shall baptise these children? who shall administer the Lord's supper to us? why are not we permitted to go with you?" Among the rest, a woman was observed leading a child by the hand. "Run, my boy," said she, "observe what haste these holy men make to receive the crown." Being reproved for desiring to go with them, "I am," she replied, "the daughter of the late bishop of Zurita, and I am carrying this child, who is my grandson, lest he be alone, and the enemy draw him into the snares of death." The bishops, with tears in their eyes, could only say,—"God's will be done." As they travelled, when the aged or the young, who wanted strength, were not able to advance, the Moors pricked them forward with their javelins, or threw stones at them. Such as were not able to walk were tied by the feet, and dragged along. Many died in the march; the rest arrived at the desert, and were fed with barley, nor were even allowed this after a season.

In the year 483, Huneric sent an edict to Eugenius with orders to read it in the church, and despatched couriers with copies of it throughout Africa. The purport of this edict was, after upbraiding the faithful bishops for their zeal in spreading their doctrines, to command them all to appear at Carthage, to dispute with the Arian bishops on a certain day, and to prove their faith, if they could, by the Scripture.

The most alarming words were, "resolving not to suffer any scandal in our provinces." The bishops interpreted these to mean, that he would not suffer any who professed the doctrine of the Trinity to remain in his dominions. They therefore drew up a remonstrance, containing in substance a petition, that Huneric would send for the bishops who were beyond the seas. Huneric, regardless of the remonstrance, persecuted the most learned bishops under various pretences. He banished the bishop Donatian after giving him one hundred and fifty bastinadoes. Others also he treated with great cruelty, and forbad any of his sect to eat with the faithful.

On the first of February, the day appointed for the conference, the bishops resorted to Carthage from every part of Africa, and from all the islands subject to the Vandals. Huneric made no mention of the conference, for many days, and separated those of the greatest abilities from the rest, that he might, on false pretences, put them to death. One of the most learned, named Lætus he burnt alive, to intimidate others.

At length, when the conference was opened, the orthodox chose ten of their own number, to answer for the rest. Cirila, the chief of the Arian bishops, was seated on a magnificent throne, with his partizans sitting in an exalted station, while the orthodox continued standing below. The latter saw what a mock conference it was likely to prove and remonstrated: the Arians ordered one hundred bastonadoes to be given to each of them. "God look down upon the violence offered us," said Eugenius. Cirila finding them better prepared than he imagined, made use of several cavils to avoid the conference. The orthodox, foreseeing this, had prepared a confession of faith, in which the Trinitarian doctrine is very explicitly declared, and which concludes thus: "this is our faith, supported by the authority of the evangelists and apostles, and founded upon the society of all the general churches through the world, in which, by the grace of God Almighty we hope to persevere till death."

The Arians, incensed at this doctrine, reported to the king, that the orthodox had raised a clamor to avoid the conference. The tyrant had taken his measures; orders were sent through the provinces, by virtue of which the churches were all shut in one day, and their revenues given to the Arians. Huneric allowed the orthodox till the first of June in the same year, that is, 484, to consider whether they would merit pardon by retraction.

Such were the measures used to obliterate the doctrines of Divine grace in Africa, where they had been so gloriously revived by Augustine. Huneric ordered the bishops to be expelled from Carthage, stripped them of horses and change of raiment, and forbad, under terrible penalties, any one to give them victuals or lodgings. The bishops remained without the walls of the city, exposed to the weather; and providentially meeting with the king, they all came to him.—"Why" say they, "are we treated thus?" Huneric looked with fury, and ordered some horsemen to ride in among them, who wounded many. He then ordered them to repair to the temple of Memory, where a paper rolled up, was presented to them, and they were required to swear to its contents. They firmly refused to swear to it without knowing what it contained. In the issue, of the 446 bishops, who came to the conference, 48 died, many of them, probably, through hard usage; 46 were banished into Corsica, 302 into other places, and most of the rest made their escape.

Huneric now pursued his sanguinary designs with vigor. Among the laity he sent executioners, who whipped, hanged, and burned alive the faithful. Donysia, while she was scourged, and the blood was streaming from her body, said, "Ministers of the devil, what you now do to confound me with shame," (for they had stripped her naked,) "is my glory:" and she exhorted the rest to suffer martyrdom. Looking severely at her son, whom she saw dreading the torture, "Remember son," said she, "that we have been baptized in the name of the Trinity. Let us not lose the garment of salvation, lest the Master should say, cast them into outer darkness." The young man upon this suffered death with constancy: and she thanked God with a loud voice, embracing his body. Many suffered with her, strengthened by her exhortations.

Victorian, the wealthiest man in Africa, was at that time governor of Carthage. Huneric, assured him of his peculiar favor, if he would submit to be re-baptized, and renounce the Trinitarian creed. "Tell the king" said he, "if there were no other life after this, I would not, for a little temporal honor, be ungrateful to my God." The king, incensed at an answer so truly christian, tormented him grievously; and thus he slept in Jesus.

At Tambaia, two brothers continued a whole day, suspended, with large stones fastened to their feet.—One of them, overcome with the torture, at length desired to recant, and to be taken down. "No, no," said the other, "this, brother, is not what we swore to Jesus Christ. I will testify against you, when we come before his awful throne, that we swore by his body and blood, that we would suffer for his sake." He said much more to rouse and encourage him. At length his fellow-sufferer cried out, "Torment as you please, I will follow my brother's example." The executioners were quite fatigued with torturing them by hot irons and hooks, and at length dismissed them, remarking, that every one appeared ready to follow the example of the two brothers, and that none were brought over to Arianism. Here we see the marks of the true church, patiently suffering for the truth's sake, and victorious in the midst of calamities.

At Typasa, the secretary of Cirila was ordained bishop by the Arians: the inhabitants seeing this, transported themselves into Spain, as the distance was but small. Some, who could obtain no vessels, remained in Africa. The new Arian bishop labored by courtesy to win their favor; but they, in contempt of his ministry, assembled themselves in a private house for worship. Huneric, having heard of this, ordered their tongues to be cut out, and their right hands to be cut off in the public market-place. This he seems to have done to prevent their open confession of the Trinity. A miracle followed worthy of God, whose majesty had been so daringly insulted, which must, at that time, have greatly strengthened the hearts of the faithful, who peculiarly need consolation amid such scenes of horrid persecutions.

The miracle is well attested; that though their tongues were cut out to the roots, they spake as well as before: without any impediment and without feeling any inconvenience from what they had suffered.

Numbers of Trinitarians were maimed in various ways by the Arians. Some lost their hands, some their feet, others their eyes, their noses, or ears. The whole clergy of Carthage, after having been almost starved with hunger, were exiled. Two Vandals, who loved the faith, accompanied by their mother, forsook their wealth, and followed the clergy into banishment. The barbarity was general. At length, after an horrible reign of seven years and ten months, in which the church was purged by as severe persecutions as any ever known, in the year 485 died the tyrant Huneric of a disease, in which he was corroded by worms,—a singular monument of Divine justice! Gontamond, his nephew and successor stopped the persecution, and recalled Eugenius to Carthage.

About this time, orthodox christians found a patron in Clovis, king of the Franks, whose victorious arms had entirely ruined the Roman power in Gaul. His queen, Clotilda, was zealous for the doctrine of the Trinity, and by her influence with her husband, Clovis professed orthodox christianity, while all the rest of the European princes were Arians.

In the year 494, Gontamond, the Vandal, still increasing his kindness to the church, opened all the places of public worship, after they had been shut ten years and an half, and, at the desire of Eugenius, recalled all the other bishops. He died in the year 496 and was succeeded by his brother Thrasamond.

Here I finish the history of the West for this century: in which, as well as the preceding, superstition had grown gradually, and the more it increased, the less were men disposed, in the faith and love of the gospel, to depend on the Savior. But the despised, desolate church, at once overborne by heretics, and by barbarous pagans, still lived in Italy, Spain, France, and Britain. In Italy and Spain, it was only tolerated. In Britain it was confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall; in France it was ready to rise again into eminence, and in Africa it had but just recovered from a dreadful scourge, in which there had been such glorious displays of the benign influence of Divine grace. The patience of the godly was now greatly tried by the secular changes, the sins of the church were scourged, and the gospel was communicated to barbarians. The general current of corrupt doctrine had borne away many; idolatry was too deeply rooted in men's hearts to be eradicated from any, except from those who were christians indeed, and we shall see it ere long, established in the formality of public worship.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Eastern Church in the Fifth Century.

HERE we find but few cheering instances of true godliness during this century. The same vices which tarnished the West, prevailed almost universally in the East, and in a much higher degree. Doctrinal feuds and malignant passions greatly abounded.

In Persia, a cruel persecution of christians raged for thirty years. What led to this was the imprudent zeal of Andas a bishop, who destroyed one of the temples where the Persians adored the fire. The Magi complained to the king, who ordered the bishop to rebuild the temple. He refused to comply with the royal mandate. The consequence was, the infuriated monarch ordered all the christian churches in his dominions to be destroyed. Orders were also given to the chiefs of the Saracens, subjects of Persia, to guard the roads, and to apprehend all christians, that they might not fly to the Romans. One of those chiefs, touched with compassion at their distress, aided their flight. He, being accused at the Persian court, fled with his family to Rome, and took along with him a number of Arabs, who, together with himself, received christian baptism, and the real church of Christ probably had an accession from this event.

The Persian king sent to demand that the christian fugitives should be delivered into his hands. The emperor having refused to give them up, a war ensued. The Romans took 7000 prisoners, whom though perishing by famine, they would not restore. Acacius, a Roman bishop, assembled his clergy, and spake thus to them; "Our God has no need either of dishes or cups; since then our church has many gold and silver vessels from the liberality of the people, let us, by means of them, free and relieve these captive soldiers." He ordered the vessels to be melted down, paid the ransom of the Persians to the Roman soldiers, gave the captives provisions and necessaries for their journey, and sent them home to their king. This was to conquer in a christian manner; a fruit of that charity which "seeketh not her own."

During this century, a Jewish impostor, in Crete, pretended that he was Moses, and that he had been sent from heaven, to undertake the care of the Cretan Jews, and conduct them over the sea. He preached a whole year in the island, with a view of inducing them to obey his directions. He exhorted them to leave all their substance; and promised to conduct them through the sea, as on dry land, and bring them into the land of promise. Numbers were so infatuated, as to neglect their business, and leave their possessions to any who chose to seize them. On the day prefixed by the impostor, he went before them, and they followed with their wives and children. It was a memorable instance of that "blindness which has happened to Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," and fulfils the Scripture account of their penal folly. When he had led them to a promontory, he ordered them to throw themselves into the sea.—None of them, it seems, had the caution to insist on his setting the example. Those who were at the brink of the precipice leaped down, many of whom perished, some by being dashed against the rocks, and some by being drowned: and many more would have perished had not a number of fishermen, providentially present, saved their lives. These, enlightened by experience, prohibited the rest from taking the leap.—They all now sought the impostor to destroy him, but he had made his escape. Many of the Cretan Jews were on this occasion brought over to the christian faith.

CHAPTER IX.

Christian Writers of this Century.

CHRYSOSTOM was the great luminary of the fifth century; he wrote with uncommon plainness and vigor in support of the doctrines of grace.

Mark, the hermit, who lived about the beginning of this century, was also an humble advocate for the same doctrines.

Paulinus, of Nola, was one of the most humble and pious writers of his time. He was born at Bourdeaux, had a classical style and taste, was of an illustrious family, and of great dignity in the empire; and having married Therasia, a rich lady, obtained by her a great estate. It pleased God to inspire his wife with the love of heavenly things, and she had great influence in inducing her husband to prefer a retired life to the grandeur of the world. He gradually parted with his wealth, and appears to have been truly weaned in his affections from his worldly possessions. After having lived sixteen years in retirement, he was urgently called to the ministry, and was ordained bishop of Nola, where he continued till his death. He evidently despised human greatness, that he might faithfully and humbly follow Jesus Christ. He led a retired and temperate life, but with no great austerity, and was singularly remarkable for the tenderness of his conscience the meekness of his spirit, and a constant sense of his own imbecility, and of his need of Divine grace.

The church of Rome, though at this time much degenerated from her primitive purity, must not be deemed antichristian, while the real doctrines of Christ were supported in it, by Cœlestine, whose life has been already brought into view.

Though Antichrist had not yet risen to his full stature, yet was he now rapidly acquiring maturity of size and strength. Leo, bishop of Rome, wrote with a great mixture of superstition. Though zealous for the support of discipline, of truth, and righteousness, he was too active for the amplification of the Roman see. He attempted to extend his influence in France, but met with a firm resistance.

The celibacy of the clergy was more strictly enforced by him than by any former bishop of Rome. Yet, in christian doctrine he was not only evangelical in general, but very elaborate and perspicuous, so as to evince the pains he had taken to understand the scriptures. He was remarkably learned on the Divine and human nature of Christ, and was pointed in opposing pelagianism. He appears to have been an humble and devout christian.

Theodoret of Cyrus, a city of Syria, distinguished himself for his pastoral labors; in which he had so great success, that above a thousand Marcionites, and many Arians were brought over to the church under his ministry. He labored, and suffered for the love of Christ, and was often in danger of death from the rage of the multitude.

Prosper of Ries, in Aquitain, was a layman, who distinguished himself in the defence of the doctrines of grace. Serious, candid, and argumentative, he withstood the semi-pelagians in France in support of the cause of truth. It appears that true religion had some prevalence in France, during this century. Much preaching and much controversy, on matters of evangelical importance, though attended with evils, prove that Christ is there by his Spirit. It is probable there was not, in any part of the world, at that time, more genuine piety than in France.

Julian Pomrius, a priest in France, deserves attention for his practical works. A few sentences, discriptive of the characters of good and bad bishops and preachers, will shew the taste of the times, as well as afford some sentiments not uninteresting to the pastors of this day.

"A wicked bishop seeks after preferment and riches; chiefly aims to gratify his passions, to confirm his authority, and to enrich himself. He avoids the laborious and humbling part of his office, and delights in the pleasant and honorable." Again he says, "A good bishop converts sinners to God by his preaching and example—lastly, he holds himself fast to God, in whom alone he puts his trust."

The difference between a good and bad preacher he thus defines: "The one seeks the glory of Jesus Christ, by explaining doctrines in familiar discourse. The other uses the utmost strength of his eloquence to gain reputation. The latter handles trifles with elaborate language: the former elevates a plain discourse by the weight of his thoughts."

CENTURY VI.

CHAPTER I.

The Life of Fulgentius, and the State of the African Churches in his Time.

IN the year 496, a storm began again to lower over the African churches. Thrasamond, whose reign then commenced, was an obstinate and sagacious Arian.—He forbade the ordination of bishops in the vacant churches. The African bishops unanimously determined not to obey an order which threatened the extinction of orthodoxy, and proceeded to the ordination of pastors. The tyrant raged and determined to banish them all. At that time Fulgentius had just been chosen bishop of Ruspæ. He was of noble birth, had received a very liberal education, and was eminent for piety. From the renewal of the Arian persecution, he underwent severe bodily sufferings. In these, his mind appears to have been serene, and faithful to his Savior, whom, in real humility and sincerity, though tarnished with the fashionable superstition, he served according to the principles of the gospel.

By the Arian persecution, Fulgentius was banished into Sardinia, in company with other faithful witnesses of orthodoxy. Upwards of 60 bishops were with him in exile. Thrasamond sent more still into Sardinia, in all 220; exerted himself greatly to overcome the constancy of the orthodox, and delighted to ensnare them with captious questions. Fulgentius was sent for by him to Carthage, and by his skill in argument, and his readiness in answering questions, he excited the king's admiration—till through the advice of his Arian clergy, who considered the presence of Fulgentius to be dangerous at Carthage, he was remanded to Sardinia. Soon after, Hilderic, the successor of Thrasamond, in the year 523, favoring the orthodox, put a total end to persecution, and Ruspæ once more beheld her bishop.

Fulgentius lived among his flock from this time to his death, eminent in piety, humility and charity. For near seventy days, he suffered extreme pains in his last sickness. "Lord, give patience here, and rest hereafter," was his constant prayer—and he died at length, as he had lived, an edifying example of every christian virtue.

He was dexterous in the defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. Hear what he says in a book addressed to king Thrasamond, on the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. "If he can quicken, who is not God; if he can sanctify who is not God; if he can dwell in believers who is not God; if he can give grace, who is not God; then the Holy Ghost may be denied to be God. If any creature can do those things, which are spoken of the Holy Ghost, then let the Holy Ghost be called a creature." The life of Fulgentius evinced that he had experienced the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost on his own heart.

CHAPTER II.

The state of the Church in other parts of the Roman Empire, till the death of Justin, including the life of Cæsarius.

IN the beginning of this century, twenty four bishops assembled, at the city of Agde, the president of whom was Cæsarius, bishop of Arles; they decreed that "all clergymen who serve the church faithfully shall receive salaries proportionable to their services."—This rule, so simple and general, was the ancient provision for the maintenance of pastors. Also they decreed that all such laymen, as shall not receive the communion, three times a year, shall be looked on as heathens. They, at this assembly, ordered that laymen remain in the church till the blessing is pronounced. Cæsarius was very zealous against the abuses which this order was designed to rectify. Observing, one day, some persons going out of the church to avoid hearing the sermon, he cried with a loud voice, "What are you about my children? where are you going? Stay, stay, for the good of your souls. At the day of judgment it will be too late to exhort you." His just and charitable zeal at length prevailed; but he was often obliged to cause the church doors to be shut, after the gospel was read, to prevent the impious practice. His people were gradually reclaimed. Alas, such is the depravity of the human heart, that mankind in all ages are apt to be weary of the word of God! Another canon of this assembly forbade auguries, and divinations, and the opening of the scriptures with a view of making an omen of the first words that offered. This last mentioned superstition was forbidden under penalty of excommunication.

Cæsarius had spent some part of his youth in the famous monastery of Lerins. Having heard that he was actually designed to be made bishop of Arles, he hid himself among the tombs. But, at the age of 30, he being taken thence, was appointed bishop, and continued in that church above 40 years. Cæsarius was fond of singing, and as he found the laity were apt to talk in the church, while the clergy were singing, he induced the laity to join with them in psalmody; and in a sermon still extant, exhorts them to sing with their hearts, as well as their voices. In another sermon he exhorts them to throw off all distracting thoughts; before they prostrate themselves for prayer. "Whoever," says he, "in his prayers, thinks on a public place of resort, or the house he is building, worships that place or that house." He directs them also not to be content with hearing the scriptures read in the church, but to read them also at home.

This holy man was indefatigable in his labors, close and searching in his preaching, entered into praticcal particulars, addressed the consciences of his hearers, and reproved severely idolatrous and superstitious usages, and amid the confusion of the times distinguished himself exceedingly by acts of mercy. He died in the year 542, universally lamented.

The cause of Arianism in the mean time, was in France gradually declining. The state of religion in the East, was far less favorable. Factions and feuds, heretical perversions and scandalous enormities filled up the scene. Under the emperor Justin, christianity began at length to wear, in some respects, a more agreeable aspect, when peace and good order were, in external things, in a measure restored.

In the year 522, Zamnaxes, king of the Lazi, a people who inhabited the country anciently called Colchis, being dead, his son Zathes repaired to Constantinople, telling the emperor that he was desirous of receiving the gospel, and of relinquishing the idolatry of his ancestors. They had been vassals to the king of Persia, and had been obliged to perform sacrifices after the Persian mode. He put himself therefore under the protection of Justin, and desired to receive the crown from his hands. Justin granting his request, the Lazi became vassals to the eastern empire, and embraced christianity. The Iberians also, who bordered on their territories, and were also subjects of Persia, had already received the gospel. How far any thing of the real spirit of Christ's religion was imbibed by either nation, I know not. I can only say, the limits of the christian name were extended in the East.

In Arabia Felix, there were many christians subject to a king called Dounouas, a Jew, who caused those who were unwilling to become Jews, to be cast into pits full of fire. He besieged Negra, a town inhabited by christians. Having persuaded them to surrender on articles, he broke his oath, burnt the pastors, beheaded the laymen, and carried all the youth into captivity. The next year, Elesbaan, king of Abyssinia, a christian country since the days of Athanasius, supported by the emperor Justin, invaded the territory of the Arabian Jew, subdued his country, and slew him. Thus the Arabian christians were relieved. Elesbaan himself was very zealous, and in proof of his zeal, resigned his crown to embrace the monastic life.

CHAPTER III.

The state of the Church during the reign of Justinian.

ON the death of Justin, his nephew Justinian succeeded at Constantinople, in the year 527. He was then 45 years old, and reigned 39. His real character was widely different from that which was ostensible. In some external things he appeared to be one of the wisest, the most pious, and the most prosperous of men. Africa and Italy were by him reunited to the Roman empire. He enacted a famous code of laws, was temperate and abstemious in private life, and incessantly employed in religious acts and ceremonies. Justinian honored monks and persons reputed holy, built splendid churches, endowed monasteries; was liberal beyond measure in support of external religion; incessant in the encouragement of what he accounted orthodoxy; was intent on public affairs; spent much time in theological speculations; extirpated idolatry, and brought over a number of barbarous kings and nations to the profession of christianity. His faculties were strong and vigorous. But he was the victim of superstition, and the slave of avarice. For gold he sold his whole empire to the governors of provinces, to the collectors of tribute, and infamous informers. He encouraged the vilest of characters in the most detestable calumnies, that he might share in their gains. He indeed showed what a poor thing the *body* of the christian religion is without the *spirit.* The evils which he wrought were palpable. Dissensions and schisms, with forced conversions attended with great cruelties, alienated the minds of men still more from godliness; and superstition and formality greatly increased. Under his influence, internal godliness invariably declined, and wickedness and ignorance awfully prevailed.

This wretched man, by imperial menaces and arms, labored to bring all nations into uniformity of doctrine, and into a nominal attachment to christianity, prescribing what all should believe, while he seems not to have known any one thing in religion in a right manner. For his own genuine conversion, and personal godliness, he appears not to have been attentive. Though he was serious through life, yet he seems to have been void of humility, faith and charity.

In the year 529, a council was held in Orange, in France, at which were thirteen bishops, and Cæcarius of Arles presided. From their doings it appears that they were decidedly in opposition to semi-palagianism, and tenacious of the doctrines of grace.

About this time, the monastic rules of Benedict, full of forms, and breathing little of the spirit of godliness, were established. These were afterwards received through the western churches. The founder of this sect zealously opposed idolatry. The worship of Apollo, he eradicated from that part of Italy, where the Samnites formerly dwelt, and instructed the peasants in christianity.

Justinian, in his old age, fell into the opinion, that the body of Jesus Christ was incorruptible; an opinion, directly subversive of the real sufferings of Christ, on which the efficacy of his atonement depends.—Having once formed the sentiment, he by an edict, required his subjects to embrace it. Eutychius, of Constantinople, considered it unchristian, and refused to publish it. He argued that according to this sentiment the incarnation of Christ was not real, but only in fancy; that the body of Christ could not be called incorruptible in any other sense, than as it was always unpolluted with any sinful defilement, and was not corrupted in the grave.

The arguments of the bishop were reasonable, but the emperor was self-sufficient, and powerful. Eutychius was roughly treated, banished, and died in exile. Anastasius, bishop of Antioch, a man of exemplary piety, also withstood this sentiment with much firmness. Many were influenced by his example, to oppose this imperial heresy. But while the old imperial pope was dictating a sentence of banishment against Anastasius and others, who had incurred his displeasure, Providence wrought deliverance, by arresting the emperor by the stroke of death. Let not profane persons exult over him; but let those who exercise their thoughts on religion, take care to study the written word with humility, prayer, and pious reverence, warned by the apostacy of a man, who for many years had studied divinity, and fell at last into an error, equally subversive of the dictates of common sense, as it is of christian piety, and diametrically opposite to all scripture: let us remember, however, that his follies and persecutions were the occasion of exhibiting some excellent characters even in the Eastern church, who showed that they bore not the christian name without a just title to that best of all appellations.

CHAPTER IV.

Miscellaneous affairs to the end of the Century.

JUSTIN, the nephew of Justinian, succeeded. He recalled the bishops whom the late emperor had exiled, except Eutychius of Constantinople. Him he did not restore till after the death of John his successor. Eutychius continued, after his restoration, bishop of Constantinople till his death. In his old age he embraced the whimsical notion, that our bodies after the resurrection become thinner than air. This shows the low state of christian knowledge in the East, and the predominancy of Origenism and Platonism, which had remained in Asia, ever since they had gained admission into the church. The purity and simplicity of the faith had been preserved in a much superior manner in the West by the faithful labors of Augustine.

At this time a number of Britons, expelled from their country by the arms of the Anglo-Saxons, crossed the sea, and settled the adjacent province of Britanny in France. With them the faith of the gospel was preserved, as well as with their brethren in Wales and Cornwall, and in some parts of Scotland and Ireland, while the major part of England was filled with Saxon idolatry.

Colomban, an Irish priest, came over, in this century, into the northern parts of Scotland and labored with much success among the Picts. His disciples were remarkable for the holiness and abstemiousness of their lives. Thus, while the gospel was rapidly withdrawing from the East, where it first arose, God left not himself without witness in the most distant parts of the West.

Toward the latter end of this century, the Lombards came from Pannonia into Italy, and settled there under Alboinus, their first king. They fixed their metropolis at Pavia. They were Arians. The Italian churches had become dreadfully corrupt; formal superstition was corroding the vitals of genuine godliness, they needed a scourge, and experienced all the horrors which a savage and victorious nation could inflict.

In the year 584, Levigildus, king of the Visigoths in Spain, having married his eldest son Hermenigildus, to Ingonda, daughter of the French king, began to find effects from the marriage, which he little expected. Ingonda, though persecuted by her mother-in-law, the wife of the Spanish monarch, persevered in orthodoxy, and by the assistance of Leander, bishop of Seville, under the influence of Divine grace, brought over her husband to the faith. The father enraged, commenced a grievous persecution against the orthodox in his dominions. Hermenigildus, having rebelled against his father, who appeared bent on his destruction, was obliged to fly for security into a church, where he was at length induced by his father's promises to surrender himself. Levigildus at first treated him with kindness, but afterward banished him to Valentia. His wife Ingonda flying to the Grecian emperor, died by the way. Some time after, the young prince, loaded with irons, had leisure to learn the vanity of earthly greatness, and exhibited every mark of piety and humility. His father sent to him an Arian bishop, offering him his favor, if he would receive the communion at his hands. Hermenigildus continued firm in the faith, and the king enraged, sent officers who dispatched him. The father lived long enough to repent of his cruelty; before he died, he desired Leander, bishop of Seville, whom he had greatly persecuted, to educate his second son Recaredus, in the same principles in which he instructed his eldest. Recaredus succeeded his father in the government, and embraced orthodoxy with much zeal. The consequence was the establishment thereof in Spain, and the destruction of Arianism, which had now no legal settlement in the world, except with the Lombards in Italy. Thus Divine Providence effected, by the means of a pious princess, a very salutary revolution in religion.

CHAPTER V.

Gregory the First, Bishop of Rome.

HE was a Roman by birth, and of a noble family.—Being religiously disposed, he assumed the monastic habit, and became eminently pious. After he was drawn from his monastery, and had been ordained to the ministry, he was sent from Rome to Constantinople, to transact ecclesiastical affairs. Here he became acquainted with Leander, afterward bishop of Seville, and profited by the acquaintance. His residence at Constantinople, was not without some use to the church. By a timely and vigorous opposition, he quashed the fanciful notion of Eutychius concerning the qualities of the human body after the resurrection, which have been already noticed. The emperor Tiberius, who succeeded Justin, supported the labors of Gregory with his authority.

Gregory, from his youth, was afflicted with frequent complaints in his stomach and bowels. The vigor of his mind was not, however, hereby depressed, and he appears to have profited by such chastisements.

After his return to Rome, the Tiber overflowed and did great damage. The granaries of the church were inundated, and a prodigious quantity of wheat was lost. An infectious and mortal distemper followed. Pelagius the bishop was one of the first victims that fell. The mortality prevailed to that degree that many houses were left without an inhabitant. In this distress the people were anxious to choose a bishop, and by unanimous consent elected Gregory. He with great humility earnestly refused, and loudly proclaimed his own unworthiness. He did more; he wrote to the emperor beseeching him to withhold his assent. But the emperor confirmed his election with pleasure. The plague, in the mean time, made dreadful havoc. Gregory, however, backward to receive the office of a bishop, forgot not the duties of a pastor. He preached faithfully, and urged upon the people the duty of repentance, that they should humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and turn to him with their whole hearts, and look to him for mercy, and persisted in praying and preaching, till the plague ceased.

After this, though the gates were watched to prevent his flight, Gregory found means to be conveyed out of the city, and concealed himself three days.—The zealous search of the people found him out, and he was obliged to enter on his bishopric, in the year 590.

Gregory discharged the office with fidelity, giving himself so far as he could wholly to the care of souls. When he entered on his office, the church in the East was almost universally fallen; in the West, it was tarnished with much superstition and defiled with a variety of wickedness. The whole period of his episcopacy, which was thirteen years and a half, was disastrous beyond measure, because of the ferocious Lombards; and Gregory himself was firmly persuaded, that the end of the world was near. Hence he had a strong contempt of sublunary things, and loved to refresh his mind with prospects beyond the grave.

From the epistles of Gregory it appears, that discipline, and indefatigable attention to order, justice, mercy and piety, marked all his proceedings. The inordinate amplitude of authority and of extensive jurisdiction, to which superstition had already advanced the Roman see, and which afforded such copious fuel to pride and ambition in some of his predecessors, and many of his successors, was to him only the cause of anxious care and conscientious solicitude. True he received the prevailing idea of a superintendence of the Roman see over all the churches, derived from St. Peter. But this appears not to have excited in him any pleasing sensations of dominion. A fatherly inspection of christendom, without civil power, called him to incessant labor. He appears to have exerted his authority in full consistency with true humility and the fear of God. Amid his abundant and extensive cares for the general welfare of the churches, he found time to expound the scriptures, to perform the office of a diligent pastor, and to write much for the instruction of mankind. Deeply must the spirit of that man have been impressed with the prospects and hopes of immortality, who, amid bodily infirmities, and in times of public perplexity, could persevere in such a course of arduous labors.

During this century the bishops of the great sees were gradually increasing in secular grandeur; and John, of Constantinople, disturbed, in Gregory's time, the peace of the church, by assuming to himself the title of universal bishop. The pride and arrogance with which he assumed it, was only equalled by the obstinacy with which he persevered. Gregory wrote with much vehemence against John's haughtiness, and, on this occasion, laid down some memorable rules of humility, which severely condemned, not himself, but his successors in the Romish see. In what a state must the East have been to revere as a great saint both living and dying, so proud a man as John of Constantinople! But there godliness was nearly expiring, and the Mahometan scourge was at hand.

For near a century and a half the gospel of Christ had been declining in Britain, and for the greatest part of that time had been confined, as we have seen, to Wales and Cornwall, or to the mountains of Scotland: while the Angles or Saxons, destroyed every appearance of evangelical light in the heart of the island. Seven Saxon kingdoms, called the Heptarchy, were now formed in the island, almost totally immersed in heathenish darkness. It was while Britain was in this deplorable situation that Gregory conceived the benevolent purpose of sending into that country christian missionaries. He actually sent them in the year 597. It is worthy of notice how much the Lord has made use of women in the propagation of the gospel among idolaters. Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, a descendant of Clovis, had been married to Ethelbert, king of Kent, one of the most wise and powerful of the Saxon princes. He had not been allowed to marry this French princess, but on the express stipulation, that she should be permitted to make free profession of christianity, in which she had been educated. Bertha brought over with her a French bishop to the court of Dorobernium, now Canterbury. Her principles were firm and sound, her conduct worthy of the christian name, and her influence over her husband considerable. Her zealous piety was not inferior to that of the queen, Clovis, which had been attended with such happy consequences in France, and every thing conspired to favor the missionaries.

These were a number of monks, at the head of whom was one named Augustine. To him Ethelbert assigned an habitation in the isle of Thanet. Here he remained at first with his associates, who were nearly 40. By the direction of Gregory, they had taken with them French interpreters, by whose means they informed the king, that they were come from Rome, and brought him the best tidings in the world, eternal life to those who received them, and the endless enjoyment of life with the living God. After some days Ethelbert paid them a visit, but being apprehensive of enchantments, he took care to receive them in the open air, where he thought he should be safer than in his house. The missionaries met him, singing litanies for their own salvation, and that of those for whose sake they had come thither. Sitting down by the king's direction, they preached to him and his attendants the word of life. To their instructions the king answered; "They are fine words and promises which ye bring, but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot afford my assent to them, nor relinquish those things, which for so long a time I have observed with all the English nation. But as ye are come hither from a great distance, and as I seem to discover, that ye are willing to communicate to us those things, which ye believe to be most true and most excellent, we are not willing to disturb you, but rather to receive you in a friendly manner, and to afford you things necessary for your support; nor do we hinder you from uniting all, whom ye can persuade by preaching, to the faith of your religion." He gave them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, with all necessary accommodations, and license to preach the word. As the missionaries approached the city, they sang in concert, "We pray thee, O Lord, in all thy mercy, that thine anger and thy fury may be removed from this city, and from thy holy house, because we have sinned. Alleluia."

The conduct of the missionaries at Canterbury was correspondent to these beginnings. They prayed, fasted, watched, preached the word of life to all, as opportunities presented, lived above the world, received nothing from those whom they taught, except necessaries, practised what they taught, and showed a readiness to suffer, or even to die for the truth which they preached. Some, admiring their innocent lives, and tasting the sweets of their doctrine, believed and were baptized.

Near the city, was an old church, built in the times of the Romans, in which, queen Bertha was wont to pray. In this, the missionaries first held their assemblies, sang, prayed, preached, and baptized, till the king himself, being converted to the faith, they obtained a larger license to preach every where, and to build or repair churches. Numbers crowded to hear, and received the word. The king, congratulating the new converts, declared that he would compel no man to become a christian, but embraced those who were christians with intimate affection as fellow heirs of the grace of life. The missionaries had taught him, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not compulsive. Ethelbert now gave them a settlement in Canterbury, suited to their station, with all necessary accommodations. London was brought into the pale of the church, and the southern parts of the island found benefit, by the labors of the christian missionaries.

Augustine, after his reception by Ethelbert, went to France and received ordination, as the archbishop of England, from the bishop of Arles, and then returned to his missionary labors.

Thus the conduct of Gregory, with respect to the propagation of the gospel in Britain, appears to have been one of the most shining efforts of christian charity. These christian missionaries, seem to have acted, in general, very laudably, and christianity to have been firmly established among the idolatrous Saxons.

Gregory, worn out at length, with his abundant labors and with diseases, slept in Jesus in the year 604. No man in any age ever gave himself up more sincerely to the service, and the benefit of his fellow men.—Power in him was a voluntary servitude, undertaken not for himself, but for the world. The belief of the Roman bishop's succession to Peter, which he found to be prevalent in Europe, was strengthened by reason of his eminent piety and laborious virtues. The seeds of Antichrist began now vigorously to shoot; and the reputation of Gregory doubtless contributed much to mature the poisonous plant. But idolatry, spiritual tyranny, and the doctrine of the merit of works, the three discriminating marks of the papacy, had as yet, no settled establishment at Rome.

CENTURY VII.

CHAPTER I.

The English Church.

IN this century, the church in Great Britain, shone with distinguished lustre. Laurentius succeeded Augustine in the see of Canterbury, and like his predecessor labored to promote the best interests of the English by frequent preaching of the word, and by a diligent and useful example. He labored to bring the British churches to a conformity with the church of Rome. In this he appears to have been actuated by a spirit of selfish ambition. His views of christian doctrine were, however, correct, and his life was unblemished.

Laurentius too, in conjunction with Mellitus, bishop of London, and Justus, bishop of Rochester, endeavored to reduce the Scots, who inhabited Ireland, to a conformity with the English church. But in this he did not succeed. While Ethelbert, the first christian king of Kent lived, the gospel flourished in his kingdom. He reigned 55 years, 21 years after he had embraced christianity, and enacted laws calculated to protect the persons and property of the church.

His son and successor, Eadbald, not only despised christianity, but also lived in incest with his father's wife. Whence, all who had embraced the gospel through motives purely secular, were induced to relapse into idolatry. Sabereth, king of the East Saxons favored and encouraged christianity. On his decease, his three sons became joint heirs of his kingdom, and immediately resumed the idolatry, which they had intermitted a little in their father's life time, and encouraged their subjects to do the same. These princes observing the bishop of London to distribute the bread of the eucharist in the church, asked why he did not give them the bread, which he had usually given to their father, and which he distributed at that time to the people? "If you will be washed in the same laver of regeneration in which your father was," replied Mellitus, "you may partake of the same sacred bread; but if ye despise the laver of life, ye cannot partake of the bread of life." "We will not," said they, "enter into that fountain; we do not know that we need it; yet we choose to eat of that bread." In vain did the upright pastor seriously and diligently admonish them, that it was not possible for any person remaining uncleansed from sin, to partake of the communion. In a rage they declared, "if you will not gratify us in so small a matter, you shall not remain in our province. They therefore ordered him to be gone with his associates.

Mellitus, thus expelled, came into Kent to consult with Laurentius and Justus. The three bishops agreed to leave the country, that they might serve God with freedom elsewhere, rather than remain among enemies without the prospect of success. Mellitus and Justus retired first into France, waiting the issue. The three princes not long after were slain in battle, but their subjects remained still incorrigible.

Laurentius, intending to follow the two bishops, employed himself in prayer in the church during the silent watches of the night, with much agony and many tears, entreating God to look upon the English church, which, after such promising beginnings, seemed now on the eve of a total dissolution. Next morning he visited the king, who, struck at last with horror for his crimes, and relenting, when he appeared in imminent danger of losing his christian instructor forever, forbade his departure, reformed his own life and manners, was baptized, and from that time became a zealous supporter of the faith.

Eadbald, to show the sincerity of his zeal, recalled Mellitus and Justus from France, after a year's exile.

Justus was reinstated in Rochester; but the people of London so preferred idolatry, and Eadbald was so deficient in authority that Mellitus could not be reinstated in that city. So far, however, as the influence of Eadbald extended, he exerted it for the cause of Christ, and, from the time of his conversion, adorned the gospel and propagated it among his people.

Laurentius being deceased, Mellitus succeeded him in the archbishopric of Canterbury, while Justus still presided at Rochester. Mellitus, after giving the most undoubted proofs of genuine piety, died and was succeeded by Justus.

Hitherto Kent had almost alone enjoyed the illumination of the gospel. But christianity was now introduced into the north, where reigned Edwin, king of the Northumbrians. A woman was once more honored as the instrument of salvation to a king, her husband, and to many of his subjects. Edwin had sent to Eadbald, to desire his sister Ethelburg or Tate in marriage. The Kentish prince, with that christian sincerity which had ever distinguished him since his conversion, answered, that it was not lawful to marry his sister to an infidel. Edwin promised certainly to grant perfect liberty of conscience to the princess and to her attendants, adding that he himself would receive the same religion, if it appeared more worthy of God. On these conditions Eadbald consented, and sent his sister into Northumberland, attended by Paulinus, who was consecrated bishop of the north of England by Justus, in the year 625. The reason of sending him was, that by daily exhortations and administration of the communion, he might guard the young princess and her attendants from the infection of idolatry. But Providence had a higher and more extensive aim, and excited in the heart of Paulinus a strong desire to propagate the gospel in those regions.

The God of this world, however, so blinded the minds of unbelievers, that though Paulinus preached a long time, yet it was without success, till Edwin was very near being murdered by an assassin, whom the king of the West Saxons sent against him, and the same night his queen was delivered of a daughter.—While the king was thanking his gods for the birth of his daughter, Paulinus began to give thanks to the Lord Christ. Edwin told him, that he himself would worship Christ and renounce all his gods, if he would give him victory over the West Saxons, who had attempted to murder him, and, for the present, gave the young infant to Paulinus to be baptized. She was the first Northumbrian who was admitted into the visible church by the ordinance of baptism; and twelve of the king's family were baptized on that occasion.—Edwin, having collected his forces, vanquished the West Saxons, and killed or reduced to subjection all who had conspired against him. Returning victorious he determined no longer to serve idols. But before he received baptism, he resolved to examine seriously the grounds and reasons of christianity. He was doubtless in good earnest, and attended diligently to the instructions of Paulinus, communed with his own heart in silence, and anxiously enquired what true religion was. Holding a consultation with his intimate friends and counsellors, he said to them "What is this hitherto unheard of doctrine, this new worship?" Coifi, the chief of the priests, answered, "See you, O king, what this is, which is lately preached to us? I declare most frankly, what I have found to be true, that the religion we have hitherto followed is of no value. If the gods could do any thing, they would more particularly distinguish me with their favors, who have served them so diligently. If the new doctrine be really better, let us embrace it." Another of the nobles observed, that he had noticed a swallow, which had rapidly flown through the king's house, entering by one door and going out at the other. This happened, he said, when the king was setting at supper in the hall: a fire burning in the midst, and the room being heated, a tempest of rain or snow raged without: the poor swallow felt indeed a temporary warmth, and then escaped out of the room. "Such, says he, "is the life of man; but what goes before, or comes after, is buried in profound darkness. Our ignorance then, upon such principles as hitherto we have embraced, is confessed; but if this new doctrine really teach us any thing more certain, it will deserve to be followed." These and similar reflections were made by the king's counsellors.

Coifi, the chief priest, on hearing Paulinus preach, exclaimed; "I knew formerly, that what we worshipped was nothing, because the more studiously I sought for truth, the less I found it. Now I openly declare that in this preaching appears the truth, which is able to afford us life, salvation, and eternal bliss. I advise that we instantly destroy the temples and altars, which we have used in vain." The king, feeling the conviction with no less strength, openly confessed the faith of Christ, and asked Coifi, who should be the first man that should profane the idolatrous places. "I ought to do it," replied the priest, "I, who worshipped them in folly, will give an example to others in destroying them, by the wisdom given me from the true God. He immediately went to the temple and profaned it, rejoicing in the knowledge of the Most High, and ordered his companions to burn the building with its enclosures.

In the year 627, this prince, with all his nobles, and very many of the commonalty, were baptized. Paulinus ,first bishop of York, continued, till the death of Edwin to preach the gospel; "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Edwin's children were afterward baptized, and so strong was the desire of his subjects for christianity, that Paulinus having come with the king and queen, to a royal villa, spent there 36 days in teaching and baptizing from morning till night. Though many of these conversions may have been merely in complaisance to the court, yet there is every reason to believe, there was a real effusion of the Spirit at this time. Those who devoted themselves professedly to the service of the true God, appear to have done it most deliberately and understandingly.

Edwin induced also Carpwald, king of the East Angles, to embrace the gospel. Sibert, his brother, succeeded him, and was a prince of singular zeal and piety, and did much for the spiritual benefitof his subjects.

Paulinus preached also in Lincolnshire, the first province south of the Humber, where the governor of Lincoln, with his house, was converted unto God.—Through the instrumentality of his preaching, and the happy effects which the Spirit of God gave to it, on the heart of Edwin and his subjects, peace, order and justice wonderfully prevailed in Northumberland, during his christian reign. But this virtuous and pious prince, was doomed to fall in battle. Having served the cause of Christ for six years, he was slain in an action, fought with Carduella, a British prince, a christian by profession, and with Penda, king of the Saxon principality of Mercia, a professed pagan. The British prince using his victory with savage barbarity, Paulinus fled with Edwin's queen into Kent, whence he had brought her. There he filled the see of Rochester, which he held till his death. His deacon, James, whom he had left in Northumberland, preserved still some remains of christianity in a province now overrun by pagans. Such are the vicissitudes of the church in this world; her perfect rest is above.

The situation of the North was, after this, deplorable, till Oswald succeeded to the kingdom. He procured Aidan, an Irish missionary, to come among his people, to whom he acted as interpreter. He also encouraged other Irish ministers to come into the north of England; by whom the gospel was preached, churches erected, and the ground lost by the expulsion of Paulinus, recovered.

Aidan was a most shining example of godliness.—He labored abundantly to convert infidels, and to strengthen the faithful. He gave to the poor whatever presents he received from the great, and continually employed himself and his associates in the scriptures. Luxury, and every appearance of avarice and ambition, he strictly avoided. With the money given him by the rich, he redeemed captives, whom he afterward instructed and fitted for the ministry. The king was not inferior to him in his endeavors to promote godliness. He encouraged every attempt to spread the knowledge and practice of godliness among men.

In the mean time Byrinus, who was sent from Rome, arrived among the West Saxons, whom he found all pagans. Cynigilsus, their king, the father-in-law of Oswald, received baptism from him, and the gospel was propagated with success through this branch of the Heptarchy.

Eadbald, king of Kent, died in the year 640, his son Easconbert, a zealous supporter of godliness, succeeded him, and was the first Saxon king who totally destroyed all the idols in his kingdom.

Oswald was at length slain in battle by the same Penda, king of Mercia, who was before mentioned, and was succeeded by his brother, Oswy. Penda son of the tyrant of Mercia, desired his daughter in marriage. The reception of christianity was made a condition of his obtaining the woman of his choice.—Young Penda, on hearing the gospel preached, declared he would become a christian, even if Oswy's daughter were denied him. Two years before the death of old Penda, the son married the Northumbrian princess, and patronized christianity in that part of his father's dominions, which was committed to his government. Old Penda renewed hostilities against Oswy and was slain in battle. Oswy, now master of Mercia and Northumberland, applied himself to propagate christianity among his new subjects. Through his influence the gospel was restored to the kingdom of the East Saxons; and London, which had rejected the ministry of Mellitus, again embraced the religion of Christ.

In this century, Ireland was filled with saints. The schools which they established were renowned for ages. That there was a real effusion of the Spirit on England, is evident; numbers were then turned from idols to the living God, and the fruits of it were long enjoyed.—Kings were truly the nursing fathers, and queens the nursing mothers of the church. Toward the close of this century the zeal and purity of christians in England began to decline.

CHAPTER II.

The Propagation of the Gospel in Germany and its Neighbourhood.

THE northern parts of Europe had hitherto remained in the darkness of Idolatry. In this century the grace of God began to visit them. Many persons travelled from Great Britain and Ireland to preach Christ in Batavia, Belgium and Germany. Colomban, an Irish monk, passed the Rhine and evangelized the Suevi, Boii, and other German nations. In this cause he labored till his death, which happened in the year 615. Gal, one of his companions, labored with much zeal about the lakes of Zurich and Constance.

Kilian, another Irish missionary came to Wirtzbourg, upon the Mayne, where a pagan duke, called Gosbert was governor. The duke received the gospel, was baptized, and many followed his example. But he had married his brother's wife. The missionary united discretion with zeal, and deferred his admonitions on this head, till he found that his pupil, the duke, was firmly settled in the faith. Kilian ventured at length to act the part of John the Baptist, and the event was in a great measure similar. Gosbert promised to obey, but delayed the execution of his promise till he should return from an expedition. The mischief of procrastination against the light of conscience, was never more strongly illustrated; in his absence, Geilana, for that was the name of the German Herodias, procured the murder of Kilian and his companions. They were engaged in devotional exercises, and died with the patience of martyrs in the year 688. Gosbert was prevailed on by the artifices of Geilana to suffer the murderers to escape with impunity. But Gosbert, with all the other actors in this tragedy, came to an unhappy end.

Holland, Westphalia, Bavaria, and the neighboring countries received the gospel during this century.

CHAPTER III.

The General History of the Church in this Century.

PHOCAS, the Greek emperor, was deposed and slain by Heraclius, in the year 610: he was a most vicious and profligate tyrant; and may be compared with Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. Since the introduction of christianity, such characters had, for two or three centuries, been exceedingly rare. For such was the benign influence of the gospel, that even amidst all the corruptions and abuses of it, which were now so numerous, a decency of character and conduct, unknown to their pagan predecessors, was supported by the emperors in general. In the beginning of the reign of Heraclius, which lasted thirty years, the Persians desolated the eastern part of the empire and made themselves masters of Jerusalem. While Asia groaned under their cruelties and oppressions, and was afflicted with scourge after scourge, for her long abuse of the best gift of God, an opportunity was given for the exercise of christian graces, to a bishop of a church, which had long since ceased to produce christian fruit.

This was John, bishop of Alexandria, called the Almoner, on account of his extensive liberality. He daily supplied with necessaries those who flocked into Egypt, after they had escaped the Persian arms. He sent to Jerusalem the most ample relief for such as remained there;—ransomed captives; placed the sick and wounded in hospitals, and visited them in person, two or three times a week. He even seems to have interpreted too strictly the sacred rule, "of giving to him that asketh of thee." His spirit, however, was noble—"should the whole world come to Alexandria," said he, "they could not exhaust the treasures of God."

The Nile not having risen to its usual height, there was a barren season, provisions were scarce, and crowds of refugees still poured into Alexandria.—John, however, continued his liberalities till he had neither money, nor credit. The prayer of faith was his resource, and he still persevered in hope. He even refused a very tempting offer of a person, who would have bribed him with a large present, that he might be ordained deacon. "As to my brethren the poor," said the pious John, "God, who fed them before you and I were born, will take care to feed them now, if we obey him." Soon after he heard of the arrival of two large ships, which he had sent to Sicily for corn. "I thank thee, O Lord," cried the bishop in a rapture of joy, "that thou hast kept me from selling thy gift for money."

From the beginning of his bishopric, he maintained 7500 poor persons by daily alms. He was accessible to them on all occasions, and divine faith appears to have influenced all his acts of love. He constantly studied the scriptures, and, in his conversation, was instructive and exemplary. Slander and evil speaking he peculiarly disliked. If any person was guilty of this, in his presence, he would give another turn to the discourse. If the person still persisted, he would direct his servant not to admit him any more.

Heresy, licentiousness and ambition, had filled the Alexandrian church, and reduced it very low, and persons behaved indecently even in public worship.—John, one day, seeing several leave the church after the reading of the gospel, went out also and sat down among them. "Children," said he, "the shepherd should be with his flock: I could pray at home, but I cannot preach at home." By doing this twice, he reformed the abuse. The preaching of the word much engaged his heart, and the disregard with which his preaching was attended was a mark of great degeneracy in the people.

In 616 John the Almoner departed from Alexandria for fear of the Persians and soon after died in Cyprus, in the same spirit in which he had lived, and with him ends all that is worth recording of the church of Alexandria.

In the same year the haughty Chosroes, king of Persia, having extended his conquests into Egypt, Heraclius sued for peace. The tyrant replied, "That, I never will consent to, till you renounce him who was crucified, whom you call God, and with me adore the sun." Chosroes was a second Sennacherib, and was treated as such by the Sovereign of the universe. The spirit of Heraclius was roused; and God gave him wonderful success: the Persian king was repeatedly vanquished, and after he had lost the greater part of his dominions, was by his own son murdered, as was the case with Sennacherib; and in the year 628, the Persian power ceased to be formidable to the Roman empire.

About the year 630 the Eutychian heresy, which maintained there was only one nature in Jesus Christ, produced another, the Monothelite, which ascribed to him but one will. Theodore, bishop of Pharan, in Arabia, first started this sentiment. Sergius, bishop of Constantinople, and Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, received and supported it. The emperor Heraclius was drawn into this heresy, and the East was rapidly overspread by it. Against this, Sophronius, a disciple of John the Almoner, took a firm stand, and in a council, at Alexandria, protested against the innovation, but in vain. The heresy spread wider and wider; Honorius, bishop of Rome, was led into the snare, and imposed silence on all the controversalists.

While this new dispute continued in the East, vice astonishingly prevailed; and the Saracen locusts, about to torment the christian world, began their ravages. In the year 608, Mahomet declared himself a prophet, and soon collected some of various sorts of persons who inhabited Arabia. At the time of his death, which happened in the year 631, he had conquered almost all that country.

After his decease, the Mahometan arms still proceeded with the same rapidity. Damascus, Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria, successively became a prey to those devourers. Persia itself was subdued. Thus did God punish both the persecuting idolaters, and the vicious professors of Christianity in the East. They were doomed to a long night of servitude under mahometanism, which continues to this time. Heraclius himself died in the year 641. God had showed him great mercies and given him very great encouragement to seek true religion, by the remarkable success of his arms against the Persians in the middle of his reign. But he lived wickedly, and thus evinced the moral tendency of his heretical sentiments.

Maximus, who had been secretary to Heraclius, was a man of real godliness, and succeeded Sophronius in the defence of the primitive faith. He, with much labor, confuted the heresiarchs. In the year 649, by his zeal and importunity, Martin, bishop of Rome, was excited to assemble a council, in the Lateran, of 105 bishops. The controversy had now lasted 18 years. Men destitute of godliness, but eagerly embracing the form, had, during this period, gratified the self-righteous bias, and the most malevolent passions of the heart, in long protracted controversies, while practical religion was awfully neglected. Nor could all the calamities of the times, and the desolation of the eastern churches, move them to the love of peace and truth.

Though Constans, who was then emperor, had, by a decree, forbidden the council to take any part in the controversy, yet Martin ventured to anathematize the supporters of the Monothelite heresy. The resentment of the emperor was excited, Martin was ordered to be dragged into the East, and made to suffer a long protracted punishment. He remained firm to the last. In his severest trials he says, "As to this wretched body, the Lord will take care of it. He is at hand; why should I give myself any trouble? for I hope in his mercy, that he will not prolong my course." His ambition, to maintain the supposed superiority of the Roman see, is blamable; but his firm adherence to the doctrines of truth, deserves the admiration of christians. He died in the year 655. In Roman language, he is called St. Martin, and appears to have had a just title to the name in the best sense of the word.

Maximus, now 75 years old, was brought, by order of Constans, to Constantinople, and underwent a number of examinations. His understanding remained vigorous, and by the solidity of his arguments, he confounded his examiners. He clearly proved, "that to allow only one will or operation in Jesus Christ, was in reality to allow only one nature; that therefore, the opinion for which the emperor was so zealous, was nothing more than Eutychianism revived; that he had not so properly condemned the emperor, as the doctrine, by whomsoever it was held; that it was contrary to the current of all ecclesiastical antiquity; that our Savior was always allowed, from the apostolical times, to be perfect God and perfect man, and must therefore have the nature, will and operations distinctly belonging both to God and man: that the new sentiment went to confound the idea both of the divinity and the humanity, and to leave him no proper existence at all: that the emperor was not a pastor, and that it had never been practised by christian emperors in the worst times, to impose silence on bishops: that it was the duty of the latter not to disguise the truth by ambiguous expressions, but to defend it by clear and distinct terms, adapted to the subject: that Arianism had always endeavored to support itself by such artifices as those employed by the emperor, and that a peace obtained by such methods in the church was at the expense of truth." Thus God raised up Maximus to defend the truth, against the attacks of its enemies.

The tyrant, enraged to find himself disappointed, ordered that Maximus should be scourged, his tongue cut out, his right hand cut off, and then banished and doomed to imprisonment for life. The same punishment was inflicted on two of the disciples of Maximus. These three upright men were confined in separate castles, in obscure regions of the East, where they enjoyed no consolations, except those which belong to men who suffer for righteousness sake.

While such barbarous measures were used by nominal christians, to support unscriptural tenets, Providence frowned on the affairs of the empire. The Saracens overrun Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and part of Africa. Even Europe suffered from their depredations.

Constans, also, having murdered his own brother, and greatly disgraced the christian name, by his follies, his vices and cruelties, was at length dispatched in the 27th year of his reign, in 667.

In 680, in a general council at Constantinople, where the emperor, Constantine Pogonatus, presided, the Monothelite heresy was anathematized, and its abettors were condemned, among whom was Honorius, a bishop of Rome. The bishop did not at that time claim or allow infallibility. The most decisive marks of Antichrist, idolatry and false doctrine, had not yet appeared in that church. Superstition and vice were lamentably on the increase in the West, a considerable degree of true piety, however, prevailed, and some gracious effusions of the Spirit of God still appeared.

In the East it was quite different. Men had there filled up the measure of their iniquity. The Mahometan conquerors reduced the ancient professors of orthodoxy to a state of extreme insignificancy. Heretics were encouraged and protected by those conquerors, while the orthodox were sorely oppressed.

Africa had shared in the general corruption in the East, and it has also shared in the general punishment. Toward the close of this century, it fell under the power of the Mahometans. This region, once fruitful in men, distinguished for soundness of faith, and for holy lives, was consigned to Mahometan darkness, and must henceforth be nearly dismissed from these memoirs.

Learning was very low, and the taste of the age barbarous. Christ had, then, however, a church in the world. In England, true godliness appears to have beamed forth with a good degree of lustre; and France seems to have enjoyed no small measure of piety. From these two countries, Divine truth made its way into Germany and the North, with glorious success. In Italy, the Lombards gradually renounced Arianism, and the purity of faith was in general preserved. In the dark ages which followed, some glimmerings of the presence of Christ with his church will appear.

CENTURY VIII.

CHAPTER I.

Venerable Bede, the English Presbyter.

THIS man was born at Farrow, near the mouth of the Tyne. At the age of seven he lost both his parents, and was then placed in the monastery of Weremouth, where he was educated with much strictness, and from his youth, appears to have been devoted to the service of God. He was afterward removed to the monastery of Jerrow, where he ended his days. He was accounted the most learned man of his time. Prayer, writing, and teaching were his familiar employments during his whole life. He was constant in riligious duties and made all his studies subservient to devotion. Of Greek and Hebrew, he had a knowledge very uncommon in that barbarous age, and by his instructions and examples, raised up many scholars. There was more learning at that time, in the British Isles, than in any other part of Europe. Genuine godliness, rather than taste or genius, appears in his writings.

In his last sickness, he was afflicted with a difficulty of breathing, for two weeks. His mind was serene and cheerful, and his affections heavenly. Amidst these infirmities, he daily taught his disciples. A great part of the night was spent in prayer and thanksgiving, and the first employment in the morning was to meditate on the scriptures and to address his God.—"God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," was frequently in his mouth. Even amidst his bodily weakness, he was employed in writing two little treatises. Perceiving his end to draw nigh he said, "If my Maker please, I will go to him from the flesh, who formed me out of nothing. My soul desires to see Christ my King in his beauty." He sang glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, which amazed all, who saw and heard him.

While Bede lived, in no part of the world, was godliness better understood and practised, than among the English.

A year before his death, in a letter to Egbert, archbishop of York, he writes, "Above all things, avoid useless discourse, and apply yourself to the holy scriptures, especially the epistles to Timothy and Titus; to Gregory's Pastoral Care, and his homilies on the gospel. It is indecent for him, who is dedicated to the service of the church, to give way to actions or discourse unsuitable to his character. Have always those about you, who may assist you in temptation: be not like some bishops, who choose to have those about them, who love good cheer, and divert them with trifling and facetious conversation."

In the same letter he also writes, "Appoint presbyters, in each village, to instruct and to administer the sacraments; and let them be studious that every one of them may learn by heart, the creed and the Lord's prayer."

In a synod, held at Cloveshoo, about the middle of this century, in which Bede appears to have had great influence, the clergy are directed to have fellowship with one another, to serve God in one spirit of faith, hope and charity, to pray for one another, and to attend the duties of the sabbath. This shows the character of Bede, and the spirit of the synod.

CHAPTER II.

Miscellaneous Particulars.

IN the early part of this century, Ceolfrid governed the two monasteries of Weremouth and Jerrow, where Bede was educated. Through his influence, the Picts, who inhabited North Britain, were brought over to the Roman mode of celebrating Easter, and of course to the Roman communion, and to share in the corruptions of that church, which continually grew more and more superstitious.

In the year 713, the Mahometans passed over from Africa into Spain, and put an end to the kingdom of the Goths, which had lasted near 300 years. Most of the professed christians, who had there become very corrupt and superstitious, were reduced to slavery.—A few, however, in the Asturian mountains, preserved their independence, and chose Pelagius for their king. He expressed his hope, that after God had chastised them for their sins, he would not give them wholly up to the Mahometans. His confidence in God was not disappointed. Under circumstances extremely disadvantageous, he defeated the enemy, re-peopled the cities, rebuilt the churches, and by the pious assistance of several pastors, supported the gospel in one district of Spain, while the greatest part of the country was overrun by the Arabians. The successors of Pelagius recovered more cities from the enemy.

Christendom, now afforded a mournful spectacle. Idolatry was widely spreading, both in Europe and Asia, among the professors of the gospel: in all those countries which had long been evangelized, men had generally forsaken the faith and precepts of Jesus. The people, who served the Lord in the greatest purity and sincerity, at this time, seem to have been our ancestors, and the inhabitants of some other regions, which had but lately received the gospel. Sin blinds the mind; and the nominal christians of the day perceived not that the avenging hand of God was upon them, till the Arabians had advanced into the heart of France, and were ravaging that country in a dreadful manner, when strong efforts were made to withstand them. In the year 732, they were totally defeated near Poictiers, by the heroic Charles Martel. By this, the providence of God stopped the progress of the Arabian locusts, and preserved a people to serve him in those western regions.

CHAPTER III.

The Controversy of Images. The maturity of Antichrist.

IN the year 727, the bishop of Rome, endeavored by temporal power to support false doctrine, and particularly that which deserves the name of idolatry.—This is probably the most proper date for the beginning of Popedom.

While men's hearts were filled with peace and joy in believing, while the doctrines of regeneration and justification were precious and all-important in their timation, and they lived by the faith of Jesus, saw his glory, and felt in their souls the transforming power of his grace; the deceitful aids of idolatry to their worship, had no charms. But now the knowledge of the gospel was adulterated and darkened; and the mind, no longer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, betook itself to the arts of sculpture and painting, to inflame its affections, and to enkindle a false fire of devotion. Pride could easily invent arguments to silence the admonitions of conscience, and gratify a self-righteous spirit, and worldly ambition lay in its claim for secular power and self-gratification. In this respect the Roman church advanced in corruption more rapidly than the Eastern. The Grecian emperors employed themselves in destroying images and pictures, while in Italy they were held in idolatrous admiration.

Leo, the Greek emperor, in the year 727, began openly to oppose the worship of images. This produced a rupture with the Roman see. Having assembled the people, with frankness and sincerity he declared to them, his settled conviction of the idolatry of the growing practice, and that images ought not to be erected for adoration. But, so deeply had error prevailed, so convenient did wicked men find it to commute for the indulgence of their crimes, by a zealous attachment to the worship of images, and so little were the scriptures then read and studied, that the subjects of Leo murmured against him as a tyrant and persecutor. Even Germanus, bishop of Constantinople, took a decided part in favor of images, in opposition to the emperor. If peace by Jesus Christ, through faith alone, be not faithfully preached, men distressed for their sins will flee to idolatry with eagerness, and be confirmed in sinful practices.

Gregory II. was now bishop of Rome; whom, on account of his open defence and support of idolatry, I shall venture to call the first Pope in Rome. From his time, the bishops of Rome, with their adherents, are to be looked on as Antichrist.

Greece and its neighboring islands, infatuated with image worship, opposed the emperor, and set up an usurper. But the rebels were routed; and the usurper was taken and beheaded.

The cause of the emperor Leo, was just, and his zeal was sincere, though his temper was too warm.—He might have been a pious christian, there is no proof to the contrary. He not only condemned the worship of images but also rejected relics and the intercession of saints. But there lived none at that time capable of doing justice to the holiness of his motives if indeed, as there is reason to hope, they were holy.

In the year 730, Leo published an edict against images, deposed the idolat rous Germanus, and appointed Anastasius, who was opposite in sentiment, in his stead. In the porch of the palace of Constantinople was an image of Christ on the cross. Leo saw it had been made an engine of idolatry and sent an officer to pull it down. Some women, who were there, entreated that it might be spared, but in vain. The officer having mounted a ladder, struck with a hatchet three blows on the face of the figure, when the women pulled away the ladder, threw him down, and murdered him on the spot. The image, however, was pulled down and burnt, and a plain cross set up in its room. Leo only objected to the erection of an human figure. The women afterward insulted Anastasius as having profaned holy things. Leo put several persons to death, who had been concerned in the murder. But the triumph of idolatry was at length so great, that the murderers are to this day honored by the Greek church, as martyrs! more blood was spilt on this occasion, partly through the vehemence of the emperor, and partly through the obstinacy of the idolaters.

The news flew to Rome, and the emperor's statues were pulled down and trodden under foot. Attempts were now made to elect another emperor, and the Pope encouraged those attempts. The issue of the ferment was that he established his, and his successors' temporal power on the ruins of imperial authority.—He was succeeded by Gregory III. who wrote to the emperor in these arrogant terms. "Because you are unlearned and ignorant, we are obliged to write to you rude discourses, but full of sense and the word of God. We conjure you to quit your pride, and hear us with humility. You say that we adore stones, walls, and boards. It is not so, my lord; but those symbols make us recollect the persons whose names they bear, and exalt our grovelling minds. We do not look upon them as gods: but if it be the image of Jesus, we say "Lord help us." If it be the image of his mother, we say, "pray to your son to save us." If it be of a martyr, we say, "St. Stephen, pray for us."

"We might, as having the power of St. Peter, pronounce punishment against you; but as you have pronounced the curse upon yourself, let it stick to you. You write to us to assemble a general council; of which there is no need. Do you cease to persecute images, and all will be quiet. We fear not your threats; for if we go a league from Rome toward Campania, we are secure." Certainly this is the language of Antichrist, supporting idolatry by infallibility, and despising both civil magistrates and ecclesiastical councils.

In a view of such arrogance, it is not to be wondered at, that Leo refused to have any further intercourse with the Roman prelate. In 732, Gregory, in a council excommunicated all, who should remove or speak contemptuously of images. Italy being thus in a state of rebellion, Leo fitted out a fleet to quell it. This was wrecked in the Adriatic. In the East, however, he continued to enforce his edicts against images, in opposition to all the sophisms of their advocates.

In the year 741, Gregory and Leo both died. Constantine Copronimus succeeded his father as emperor; and Zachary succeeded as Pope. The new emperor imitated his father's zeal against images. Zachary showed himself worthy of the title of temporal prince. He fomented discord among the Lombards, and, by intrigues obtained an addition to the patrimony of the church.

Pepin, now prime minister of state in France, sent a case of conscience to the Pope to be resolved, which was, whether it would be right in him to depose his sovereign Childeric III. and reign in his stead. Zachary answered in the affirmative. Pepin then threw his master into a monastery and assumed the title of king. Zachary died in the year 752, and was succeeded by Stephen.

In 754, the Greek emperor held a council of 338 bishops to decide the controversy concerning images. On the nature of the heresy, they say, "Jesus Christ hath delivered us from idolatry, and hath taught us to adore him in spirit and in truth. But the devil not being able to endure the beauty of the church, hath insensibly brought back idolatry under the appearance of christianity, persuading men to worship the creature, and to take for God a work, to which they give the name of Jesus Christ."

Constantine now determined on exterminating all vestiges of idolatry, burnt the images, and demolished the walls, which were painted with representations of Christ or the saints.

Pope Stephen, now at war with the Lombards, applied to Pepin to succor St. Peter; promising the remission of sins, a hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. Shortly after this, Stephen visited Pepin and anointed him with oil as king of the Franks, and by the authority of St. Peter, forbad the French lords, on pain of excommunication, to choose a king of another race. Pepin, in return, afforded succor to St. Peter, attacked Astulphus, king of the Lombards, so vigorously as to compel him to deliver up Ravenna, and twenty-one cities besides, to the Pope. With the acquisition of Ravenna, and its dependencies, Stephen added rapacity to his rebellion. From this time, he not only assumed the tone of infallibility and spiritual dominion, but became literally a temporal prince.

In 757, Stephen died and was succeeded by Paul. In 768 Pepin, the great supporter of the Popedom, died, and was succeeded by his son Charles, commonly called, on account of his great exploits, Charlemagne. By him, Adrian, the successor of Paul, obtained an enlargement of territorial jurisdiction.

In 775, the emperor Constantine died, after having vigorously opposed image worship during his whole reign. Leo, his son and successor, trod in his steps and exercised severities on the supporters of image worship. On his decease in 680, his wife Irene assumed the government in the name of her son Constantine, now ten years old. She openly and zealously supported idolatry. Images and the monastic life again prevailed in Greece and Asia. In this they awfully departed from the all-important article of justification. During the whole of this century the pulpits were silent on this doctrine; false religion grew without any check or molestation; and vices, both in public and private life, proportionably increased.

In 787 the second council of Nice, held under the empress, confirmed idolatrous worship. Pope Adrian, having received the acts of this council, sent them to Charlemagne, that he might procure the approbation of the bishops of the West. The customs and habits of the West were far from favoring the reigning idolatry. At this gloomy period the features of real religion are to be found in the churches newly planted. The island of Great Britain was then decidedly against idolatry. The British christians execrated the second council of Nice; and some of the Italian bishops protested against the growing evil. France itself had, as yet, shown no disposition positively in favor of idolatry.

Charlemagne, struck with the discordancy of the Nicene council, with the principles and practices of the West, ordered the western bishops to examine the merits of the question. Their result was, that images might be set up in churches, and serve as books for the instruction of the people. But they condemned, in free terms, the late Grecian Synod, which enjoined the worship of images. They allowed the primacy of St. Peter's see, but would not found their faith on the Pope's decrees. Charles and the French churches, persevered in their own middle practice, used images, but abhorred the adoration of them.

A synod of 300 bishops in the year 794, at Frankfort, condemned the second council of Nice, and the worship of images. Before the close of the century Adrian died and was succeeded by Leo III. Political intrigue, and secular artifice, not theological study, was then the practice of Roman bishops. The Irish, at this time, particularly excelled in divinity, some of that nation travelled through various countries, and became renowned for knowledge. The superior light of England and France, in the controversy of images, proves both those countries, in knowledge and in regard for the doctrines of scripture, to have been far superior to Rome. Yet so strongly were men prejudiced in favor of the dignity of the Roman see, that it still remained in the height of its power, and was able, in process of time, to communicate its idolatrous abominations through Europe. In the East, the worship of images was triumphant, but as yet not universal. The East and West, were now overgrown with false worship; even those parts, which as yet, were not disposed to receive idolatry, were prepared for its gradual admission, partly by the prevalence of superstition, and partly by the submission of the European churches to the domination of the Roman see. There the seat of Antichrist was firmly fixed. Rebellion against the lawful power of the magistrate, the most arrogant claims to infallibility, and the support of image worship, conspired with the temporal dominion lately obtained by the bishop of Rome, to render him the tyrant of the church. His dominions, were, indeed, not large, but in conjunction with the proud pretensions of his ecclesiastical character, they gave him a superlative dignity in the eyes of all Europe. From the year 727 the face of the whole church was altered: and from that time, till nearly the year 2000, we may have the dominion of the beast; the forty and two months, or 1260 days, a day being put for a year, while the witnessess are to prophesy in sackcloth.—We must now look for the true church, either, in distinct individual saints, who, in the midst of popery, were preserved by effectual grace, in vital union with the Son of God, or in associations of true christians, formed in different regions, who were in a state of persecution and much affliction. Where then was the true church in the eighth century? She still existed; and the opposition made to idolatry by Charles and the council of Frankfort, demonstrates the fact.—Nothing but the influence of sentiments, very opposite to those which were fashionable at Rome, can account for such events, at a time, when the dignity of the Roman see was held in universal veneration.—The propagation of the gospel among pagans chiefly indicates the existence of the real church in this century. Some real work of this kind was propagating, while the popedom was forming; and, by the adorable providence of God, pious missionaries, who entered not into the recent controversies, but were engaged in actions purely spiritual, were patronized and supported in preaching Christ among foreign nations, by the same popes of Rome who were opposing his grace among their own subjects. Their ambition led them to cherish the zeal of the missionaries, but with how different a spirit! To this scene let us now direct our attention.

CHAPTER IV.

The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century, and an account of the life of Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz.

THE great luminary of Germany was Winfrid, an Englishman, who had been brought up in the monastic life from his infancy. In the year 719, he was appointed by Gregory II. bishop of Rome, to the missionary life and labors. His commission was of the most ample and unlimited nature. In execution of this he went into Bavaria and Thuringia. In the first country, he reformed churches, in the second, he was successful in the conversion of infidels. Here also he observed, how true religion, where it had been planted, was almost destroyed by false teachers; some pastors, indeed, were zealous for the service of God, but others were devoted to scandalous vices: the English missionary beheld their state, and the ill effects of it on the people, with sorrow, and strove incessantly to recover them to true repentance.

A door was now opened in Friezeland for the free preaching of the gospel. Thither, Winfrid repaired and co-operated with Willibrod, another English missionary who had already spent much time among the Frisons. Many received the word of God; churches were erected, and idolatry was more and more subdued.

Winfrid, having labored among the Frisons with success, passed into Hesse, to a place called Omenburg, belonging to two brothers, who were nominal christians, but practical idolaters. Here his labors were successful, both on them and their subjects; and throughout a great part of Hesse, even to the confines of Saxony, he erected the standard of truth, and upheld it with much zeal, to the confusion of the kingdom of Satan. In a country so poor and uncultivated as the greater part of Germany then was, Winfrid suffered many severe hardships. At times, he supported himself by the work of his hands, and was exposed to imminent peril from the rage of the obstinate Pagans.

After a considerable residence in Germany, he returned to Rome, where he was kindly received by Gregory II, and was consecrated bishop of the new German churches, by the name of Boniface. The policy of the Pope, in giving to this English missionary a Roman name, seems to have been, to procure from the German converts, respect to himself. This appears further to have been his design, from the circumstance, that he required of the new bishop an oath of subjection to the papal authority, conceived in the strongest terms. On his return into Germany Boniface exerted himself with much zeal against the idolatrous superstitions of the country. Protected by the civil authority of the French government, he caused an oak of prodigious size, which had been the occasion of much pagan delusion, to be cut down.

About the year 723, Daniel, bishop of Winchester, wrote to Boniface concerning the best method of dealing with idolators. "Do not contradict," says he "in a direct manner their accounts of the genealogy of their gods; allow that they were born from one another in the same way as mankind are; this concession will give you the advantage of proving, that there was a time when they had no existence. Ask them who governed the world before the birth of their gods; ask them if these gods have ceased to propagate. If they have not, show them the consequence; viz: that the gods must be infinite in number, and that no man can rationally be at ease in worshipping any of them, lest he should by that means, offend one, who is more powerful. Argue thus with them, not in a way of insult, but with temper and moderation: and take opportunities to contrast these absurdities with the christian doctrine: let the pagans be rather ashamed than incensed by your oblique mode of stating these subjects. Show them the insufficiency of their plea of antiquity: inform them that idolatry did anciently prevail over the world, but that Jesus Christ was manifested, in order to reconcile men to God by his grace."

Piety and good sense appear to have predominated in these instructions, and we have here proofs, in addition to those already given, of the grace of God conferred on our ancestors during the Heptarchy.

The reputation of Boniface was now high; and many from England resorted into Germany, to connect themselves with him. These dispersed about the country, and preached in the villages of Hesse and Thuringia.

In 732, Boniface received from Gregory III. the title of archbishop, by whom too he was supported in his mission.

After he had continued his exertions with unabated vigor and with great success for some time longer, in the scene of his previous labors, he was at length, fixed at Mentz, and he is commonly called archbishop of that city.

Under the increase of his dignity, his zeal and exertions were not remitted. He suffered much from pagans, false christians, and immoral pastors, but endured his sufferings with firmness, supported by confidence in his divine Master. Though oppressed with age and infirmities, he determined to return into Friezeland. Before this event, he acted as if he had a strong presentiment of his approaching exit. He appointed Lullus, an Englishman, his successor, as archbishop of Mentz, and wrote to the abbot of St. Denys, desiring him to acquaint the king, Pepin, that he and his friends believed his death was near. He begged, that the king would show kindness to the missionaries, whom, he should leave behind him.—"Some of them" said he, "are priests, dispersed into diverse parts, for the good of the church: others are monks, settled in small monasteries, where they instruct the children. There are aged men with me, who have long assisted me in my labors. I fear, lest after my death, they be dispersed, and the disciples, who are near the frontiers, should lose the faith of Jesus Christ. I beg that my son Lullus, may be confirmed in the episcopal office, and that he may teach the priests, the monks, and the people. I hope that he will perform these duties. That, which most afflicts me, is, that the priests, who are on the pagan frontiers, are very indigent. They can obtain bread, but no clothes, unless they be assisted, as they have been by me. Let me know your answer, that I may live or die with more cheerfulness."

It is most probable that he received an answer agreeable to his benevolent wishes, as he himself ordained Lullus his successor, with the consent of Pepin. Boniface went by the Rhine into Friezeland, where, assisted by Eoban, whom he had ordained bishop of Utrecht, after the death of Willibrod, he brought great numbers of pagans into the pale of the church. He had appointed a day to confirm those, whom he had baptized. In waiting for them, he encamped with his followers, on the banks of the Bordne, a river which then divided East and West Friezeland. His intention was to confirm, by imposition of hands, the converts on the plains of Dockum. On the appointed day, he beheld, in the morning, not the new converts, whom he expected, but a troop of angry pagans, armed with shields and lances. The servants went out to resist, but Boniface, with calm intrepidity, said to his followers, "Children, forbear to fight; the scripture forbids us to render evil for evil. The day, which I have long waited for, has come. Hope in God, and he will save your souls." Thus did he prepare the priests and the rest of his companions for martyrdom. The pagans attacked them furiously, and slew the whole company, fifty-three in number, including Boniface himself. This happened in the year 755, in the 40th after his arrival in Germany and the 75th of his age. The manner, in which his death was resented by the christian Germans, shows their high veneration for his character. They collected a great army, attacked the pagans, slew many of them, pillaged their country, and carried off their wives and children. Those, who remained pagans in Friezeland, were glad to obtain peace by submitting to christian rites. Such a method of shewing regard for Boniface, might be expected from a rude and ill informed multitude. But, though rude they had the gifts of common sense, and could feelingly estimate the friendship and benificence of the apostle of the Germans. And if their vindictive punishment of his murderers was severe and unchristian it was natural. Boniface appears to have been a man of genuine piety and exemplary virtue.—Though excessively attached to the Roman see, and to monastic institutions, yet he did not practise idolatry or teach false doctrine. Removed from the scene of controversy, he seems not to have taken any part in the debate concerning images, but uniformly to have opposed idolatry and immorality. For many years, he lived amidst dangers and sufferings, and supported a uniform zeal for the reformation of the clergy, and the conversion of infidels, to which objects he sacrificed all worldly conveniences, and at last, finished his course in martrydom, in the patience and meekness of a disciple of Christ. God made use of his labors, greatly to extend the bounds of the church in the north of Europe, while they were so much contracted in Asia and Africa.

Virgilius, an Irishman, was appointed bishop of Saltzburg, by king Pepin. His modesty prevented him from entering upon the office for two years; but he was at length prevailed on to receive consecration. He followed the example of Boniface in extirpating the remains of idolatry in his diocese and died in the year 780.

The church of Utrecht, in Friezeland, was governed by Gregory, who, from the fifteenth year of his age, had been a follower of Boniface. Two of his brothers having been murdered in a wood, the barons, whose vassals they were, delivered the murderers bound into his hands. Gregory, after he had treated them kindly, bade them depart in peace, saying "sin no more, lest a worse thing befal you." He was assisted in his ministerial labors by several disciples;—some were of his own nation, the French, others were English, Frisons, newly converted Saxons, and Bavarians. Scarce a morning passed, without his giving them spiritual instruction. He affected no singularity either in habit or diet. He recommended sobriety among his disciples, was not to be moved from the path of duty by slander, and was boundless in his liberality to the poor. He died about the year 776.

Liefuvyn, an Englishman, one of his disciples, was distinguished by his labors, as a missionary in Germany. He even ventured to appear before the pagan Saxons, while assembled upon the Weser sacrificing to their idols, and exhorted them with a loud voice to turn from those vanities unto the living God. As an ambassador from Jehovah, he offered them salvation. Here his zeal had well nigh cost him his life; but he was at length suffered to depart, on the remonstrances of Buto, one of their chiefs, who expostulated with them on the unreasonableness of treating an ambassador of the great God with less respect than they did one from any of the neighboring nations. In the mean time, the arms of Charlemagne prevailed over the Saxons, and eventually facilitated the efforts of Liefuvyn, who continued to preach among this people till his death.

This was an age of missionaries: their character and their success form almost the only shining picture in this century. Villehad, an Englishman was abundantly successful among the Saxons. He became bishop of Bremen, and was called the apostle of Saxony. He commenced his mission in Dockum, where Boniface had been murdered, and was the first missionary who passed the Elbe. After he had labored 35 years, and had been bishop of Bremen two years, he died. In his dying moments, he said to his weeping friends, "withhold me not from going to God: these sheep I recommend to him, who intrusted them to me, and whose mercy is able to protect them."

Firmin, a Frenchman, preached the gospel, under various difficulties, in Alsace, Bavaria, and Switzerland, and inspected a number of monasteries. Rumold travelled into Lower Germany, next into Brabant, diffused much light in the neighborhood of Mechlin, and in 775, was murdered by two persons, one of whom he had reproved for adultery.

The north of France was in this century, full of pagans and merely nominal christians. Silvin, who was born in Thoulouse, travelled thither, preached among them for many years, and gathered in a large harvest. He died at Auchy, in the county of Artois.

CHAPTER V.

Authors of this Century.

THE most learned writer of this century, except Bede, seems to have been John of Damascus. He mingled the Aristotelean philosophy with the christian religion, and defended the Arminian sentiment of free-will, in opposition to the doctrine of effectual grace. In this he labored to teach man to rely on himself.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, John appears to have been orthodox: in other respects he was one of the most powerful supporters of error. He advocated the practice of praying for the dead, as effectual to the remission of sins, also defended the detestable doctrine of image worship, and contributed more than any other author, to establish this practice in the East.

In the year 790, Alcuin was sent ambassador into France by Offa, king of the Mercians. On this occasion, he gained the esteem of Charlemagne, and persuaded that monarch to found the universities of Paris and Pavia. He was looked upon as one of the wisest and most learned men of his time. He read public lectures, in the emperor's palace, and in other places. He wrote in an orthordox, candid and able manner, on the Trinity. He died in 804.

Paulinus, of Aquileia, was distinguished as a writer, in the opposition, which he maintained to the errors of Felix, bishop of Urgel, who attempted to separate the humanity from the Divinity of the Son of God. It is remarkable that Paulinus and some other Italian bishops, in the year 787, agreed to condemn the decrees of the second council of Nice, as idolatrous, though

Pope Adrian had assisted at that council by his legates, and used his utmost endeavors to maintain its authority. The despotism of Antichrist was then, so far from being universal, that it was not owned throughout Italy itself. In some parts of that country, as well as in England and France, the purity of christian worship was still maintained. The city of Rome, and its environs, seem, at this period, to have been the most corrupt part of christendom, nor was a single missionary an Italian.

CENTURY IX.

CHAPTER I.

A General View of the State of Religion in this Century.

WE are penetrating into the regions of darkness, and a "land of deserts and pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death," and we are carried by every step into scenes still more gloomy than the former.—Here and there, indeed, a glimmering ray of the sun of righteousness is discernable, but it is in vain to look for any steady lustre of evangelical truth and holiness, amidst this dismal darkness.

The several circumstances which attended the gloom of this century are reducible to the following heads: The preference given to human writings above the scriptures; the domination of the popedom; the accumulation of ceremonies: and the oppression of the godly.

It was now fashionable to explain scripture entirely by the writings of the fathers. No man was permitted with impunity to vary in the least degree from their decisions. The apostolic rule of interpretation, to compare spiritual things with spiritual, was in a manner lost. It was deemed sufficient, that such a renowned doctor had given such an interpretation.—

Hence men of learning and industry paid more attention to the fathers, than to the sacred volume, which, through long disuse and neglect, was looked on as obscure and perplexed, and quite unfit for common reading. Even divine truths seemed to derive their authority more from the word of man than of God ; and the writings and decrees of men were not treated as witnesses, but usurped the office of judges of divine truth.

The popedom now grew stronger and stronger, and whoever dared to oppose the bishop of Rome, drew upon himself a host of enemies. All, who looked for advancement in the church, were attached to Antichrist, very little resistance was consequently made to image worship. Most persons contented themselves with a simple exposition of their creed. Idolatry was now supported by the whole power and influence of the popedom.

The great accumulation of ceremonies, considered absolutely necessary to salvation, drew off the attention of men from christian piety. The all-important article of justification was nearly smothered in the rubbish ; and pastors were so much engrossed with the rites of worship, that they were almost entirely diverted from intellectual improvement.

Men of eminence, both in church and state, partly through superstition, and partly through secular views, suppressed every attempt to reform mankind.

In Asia, Mahometanism still reigned, and scarce a vestige of real godliness appeared in the Eastern church. There image worship was still a subject of debate : but at length, under the patronage of the superstitious empress Theodora, it effectually triumphed.

In this dark season, the absurd tenet of transubstantiation was introduced. John Scotus Erigena, and Rabanus, archbishop of Mentz, two of the most learned men of that age, pleaded the cause of common sense, and opposed this absurd doctrine ; but their learning seems to have had very little connexion with godliness ; for they joined in opposing the doctrine of grace, concerning which a controversy of some importance was raised.

In France, the views of divine grace were now more and more darkened; and we shall presently find that a zealous advocate for them could not be heard with candor. Ado, archbishop of Vienne, was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation. He usually began his sermons with these or similar words: "Hear the eternal truth, which speaks to you in the gospel:" or, "hear Jesus Christ who saith to you." He took particular care of the examination of candidates for orders; and was a very diligent disciplinarian. He was inflexibly vigilant against vice; and, while his own example was an honor to his profession, he enjoined his clergy to apprise him, if they should discover error in his conduct. Nor did king Lothaire find him obsequious to his lusts: for, through Ado's vigorous remonstrances, he was obliged to desist from a design of divorcing his queen. He sympathized with sincere penitents, and was a real friend to the poor, both in a spiritual and temporal sense, and was the founder of many hospitals for their reception.

In England, the decline of godliness was now grievous. A most savage and lawless people invaded this country. The great Alfred was raised to defend his country against them. One of his speeches delivered to his soldiers, before a battle, displays much good sense and a spirit of religion. In this, he told his people, that their sins had given their enemies the advantage; that they ought to reform their own manners to engage the favor of God; that in other respects they had the superiority, christians were fighting against heathens, and honest men against robbers; that theirs was not a war of ambition or conquest, but of necessary self-defence. In the battle which followed he entirely defeated the Danes.

Alfred took great pains to instruct his subjects in the things of religion, encouraged literature, and founded the University of Oxford. He constantly attended public worship, and from his youth was wont to pray for grace, and to use serious methods to subdue his passions. Through life he appears to have maintained a beautiful consistency of character. There is nothing to excite doubts of the sincerity of his piety. After his decease the mist of ignorance again prevailed in England.

In the year 814, Charlemagne died aged 72. It is scarce worth while to recount the *splendid sins* of this emperor; since his sanguinary ambition and habitual lewdness, too plainly evince his want of christian principles. He revived the western empire in Germany. He was a great instrument of Providence, in extending the pale of the church; and, at the same time, fixed the power of the popedom on the strongest foundations. His labors, also, to revive learning, were very great; but like those of Alfred, they failed of success. His religious and moral character bears no comparison with that of the English monarch.

CHAPTER II.

The Paulicians.

ABOUT the year 660, a new sect arose in the East: the accounts of which are far more scanty, than a writer of real church history could wish. Constantine, who dwelt in an obscure town near Samosatia entertained a deacon, who had been a prisoner among the Mahometans, from whom he received the gift of the New Testament in the original language. He improved the deacon's gift, and betook himself to a close study of the sacred oracles, and formed a plan of Divinity from the New Testament. Finding St. Paul, the most systematical of all the apostles, he very properly prefered his writings. And it is universally acknowledged that he was in possession of the genuine text.

This sect appear to have taken their name from St. Paul himself. Constantine adopted that of Sylvanus; and his disciples were called Titus, Timothy, Tychius, after the apostle's fellow-laborers; and demonstrations of the apostolic churches were given to the congregations formed by their labors in Armenia and Cappadocia. The Paulicians seem to have been perfectly un-like any other denomination of christians, and to have originated from an heavenly influence, teaching and converting them. And in them is manifested one of those extraordinary effusions of the Divine Spirit, by which the knowledge of Christ and the practice of godliness are kept alive in the world. They cordially received the writings of St. Paul; and from this we may infer that they also did the other parts of the sacred canon. They adhered closely to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity; were perfectly free from image worship, which more and more pervaded the East; disregarded relics, and all the fashionable equipage of superstition, and were simply scriptural in the use of the sacraments. They knew no other mediator, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sylvanus preached with great success. Pontus and Cappadocia, before renowned for christian piety, were again enlightened through his labors. He and his associates were distinguished from the clergy of that day, by their scriptural names, modest titles, knowledge, activity and holiness. Their congregations were diffused over the provinces of Asia Minor to the west of the Euphrates; six of the principal churches were called by the names of those to whom St. Paul addressed his epistles: and Sylvanus resided in the neighborhood of Colonia in Pontus.

The Greek emperors, at length roused by the growing importance of the sect, began to persecute the Paulicians with the most sanguinary severity; and, under christian forms and names, re-acted the scenes of Galerius and Maximin. They ordered them to be capitally punished, and their books, wherever found, to be committed to the flames; also, that if any person was found to have secreted them, he was to be put to death, and his goods to be confiscated. False religion, in all ages, hates the light, and supports itself, not by instruction, but by persecution, while the real truth, as it is in Jesus, *comes to the light* of scripture, and exhibits that light plainly to the world by reading and expounding the sacred volume, whence alone it derives its authority.

The enemies of the Paulicians conducted the persecution against them with singular violence and cruelty. Simeon, a Greek officer clothed with imperial power, came to Colonia, and apprehended Sylvanus and a number of his disciples. Stones were put into the hands of these last, and they were required to kill their pastor, as the price of their forgiveness. A person, named Justus, was the only one of the number who obeyed; and he stoned to death the father of the Pauliciuns who had labored among them, twenty seven years. Justus signalized himself still more by betraying the brethren; while Simeon, struck with the evidences of divine grace apparent in the sufferers, embraced the faith which he came to destroy, gave up the world, preached the gospel, and died a martyr. For 150 years, these servants of Christ underwent the horrors of persecution with christian patience and meekness. If the acts of their martyrdom, their preaching, and their lives, were distinctly recorded, there is no doubt, they would resemble those, whom the church justly reveres as having suffered in behalf of Christ. All this time the power of the Spirit of God was with them; and they practised the precepts of the 13th chapter to the Romans, as well as believed and felt the precious truths contained in the doctrinal chapters of the same epistle. The blood of the martyrs was in this case, as uniformily, the seed of the church: a succession of teachers and congregations arose, and a person named Sergius, who labored among them 33 years, is acknowledged, by historians unfriendly to this sect, to have possessed extraordinary virtue. The persecution had, however, some intermissions, till Theodora, the empress, who had fully established image worship, exerted herself beyond any of her predescessors against the Paulicians. Her inquisitors ransacked the Lesser Asia, in search of these sectaries, and she is computed to have killed by the gibbet, by fire, and by sword, a hundred thousand persons.

We have brought down the scanty history of this denomination to about the year 845. To undergo a constant scene of persecution with christian meekness, and to render to God and to Cæsar their dues, all the time, at once require and evince the strength of real grace. Of this the Paulicians seem to have been possessed till the period just mentioned. They remembered the injunction of Rev. 13, 10. "He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: here is the faith and patience of the saints." Let christians believe, rejoice in God, patiently suffer, return good for evil, and still obey those, whom God hath set over them. These weapons have ever been found too hard for Satan: the power of the gospel has prevailed, and the church has grown exceedingly, whenever they have been faithfully handled. This was the case preeminently with the church in the era of Dioclesian's persecution. She not only outlived the storm, but also, under the conduct of Providence, became externally, as well as internally, superior to her enemies.—If the Paulicians had continued to act thus, the consequences would probably have been similar. But faith and patience at length failed. They were gradually betrayed into a secular spirit. About the year 845, they murdered two persecutors, a governor and a bishop. A soldier called Carbeas, who commanded the guards in the imperial armies, that he might revenge his father's death, who had been slain by the inquisitors, formed a band of Paulicians, who renounced their allegiance to the emperor, negotiated with the Mahometan powers, and, by their assistance, endeavored to establish the independency of the sect.

The cruelties and superstitions of Theodora, received the applause of Nicolas, who became Pope of Rome in 858. So truly was Antichristian tyranny now established! Chrysocheir succeeded Carbeas, and in conjunction with the Mahometans, not only put Michael the son and successor of Theodora to flight, but penetrated into the heart of Asia, and desolated the fairest provinces of the Greeks. In the issue, the conqueror was slain, the Paulician fortress Tophrice was reduced, and the power of the rebels broken, except a number in the mountains, who, by the assistance of the Arabs, preserved an uncomfortable independence. The ferocious actions of the latter Paulicians show, that they had lost the spirit of true religion, and that they had nothing more of the sect than the name. Their schemes of worldly ambition were however frustrated. Political methods of supporting the gospel, often lead the mind away from God for support, and issue in disappointment.

On the whole, we have seen, in general, satisfactory proof of the work of Divine grace in Asia Minor, commencing in the latter end of the seventh century, and extending to the former part oft he ninth. But where secular politics begin, there the life and simplicity of vital godliness end. When the Paulicians began to rebel against the established government; to return evil for evil, *to mingle among the heathen, the Mahometans*, and to defend their own religion by arms, negociations and alliances, they ceased to become the LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and the salt of the earth. Such they had been for more than 180 years, adorning and exemplifying the real gospel, by a life of faith, hope and charity, and by the preservation of the truth in a patient course of suffering. They looked for true riches and honor in the world to come; and doubtless they are not frustrated in their hope. But, when secular maxims began to prevail among them, they shone for a time, as heroes, and patriots, in the false glare of human praise; but they lost the solidity of true honor, as all have done in all ages, who have descended from the grandeur of real conformity to Christ, and have prefered to that, the low ambition of earthly greatness.

CHAPTER III.

Opposition to the Corruptions of Popery in this Century.

THE absolute power of the Pope, the worship of images, and the invocation of saints and angels were opposed, in this century, as in the last, by several princes and ecclesiastics. A council at Paris, in 824, rejected the decrees of the second council of Nice, and prohibited image worship. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, wrote against the abuse of pictures and images: he maintained that we ought not to worship any image of God, except that, which is God himself, his eternal Son; and, that there is no other mediator between God and man, but Jesus Christ, both God and man.

Claudius, bishop of Turin, pointedly opposed image worship. On this subject, he speaks in the following terms, "If they, who have quitted the worship of devils, honor the images of saints; they have not forsaken idols, they have only changed their names. For whether you paint upon a wall the pictures of St. Peter, or St. Paul, or those of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury, they are now neither gods, nor apostles, nor men.—The name and error continue the same. If men must be adored, there would be less absurdity in adoring them when alive, while they are the image of God, than after they are dead, when they only resemble stocks and stones. And if we are not allowed to adore the works of God, much less are we allowed to adore the works of men. If the cross of Christ ought to be adored, because he was nailed to it, for the same reason we ought to adore mangers, because he was laid in one; and swaddling clothes, because he was wrapped in them. We have not been ordered to adore the cross, but to bear it, and to deny ourselves."

The labors of Claudius were not in vain. In his own diocese he checked the growing evil; and the valleys of Piedmont, which belonged to his bishopric, persevered in his opinions in the ninth and tenth centuries. Whence it appears that the churches of the Waldenses received much increase from his labors.—Claudius stood firm against the false reliefs of a burdened conscience, which the popedom exhibited, and pointed his hearers and reader to the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the sole and all sufficient object of dependence. He insisted largely that man shall be justified before God BY JESUS CHRIST THROUGH FAITH ALONE.

From the year 823, Claudius wrote against the abominations of the church of Rome, and lived to the year 839.

So far were the decrees of the papacy from being owned as decisive, through Europe.

CHAPTER IV.

The Case of Gotteschalcus.

THE subject of predestination and grace had been formerly controverted in the churches of France, with a considerable degree of acuteness and ingenuity, and what is still more pleasing to a christian mind, with seriousness, candor, and charity. We have seen with what zeal the doctrine of divine grace had been defended and illustrated by the followers of Augustine, and what a salutary influence had attended those doctrines on the knowledge, the spirit, and the lives of christians. But, as superstition, idolatry, and ignorance increased, the truly evangelical views of Augustine were more and more thrown into the shade, and the case of Gotteschalcus showed that it was now no longer permitted to a divine, to promulgate the sentiments of Augustine with impunity.

Gotteschalcus was born in Germany, and from early life had been a monk devoted to theological inquiries. He entered with much zeal into the sentiments of Augustine.

About the year 846, he left his monastery, and went into Dalmatia, and Parmonia, where he spread the doctrine of Augustine. At his return, he remained some time in Lombardy, and in 847, held a conference with Notingus, bishop of Vienne, concerning predestination. His zeal gave offence to Notingus, who prevailed on Rabanus, the archbishop of Mentz, to undertake the confutation of the novel heresy, as it was now decreed. Rabanus calumniated Gotteschalcus with those monstrous and licentious consequences, with which the doctrines of Divine grace have in all ages been aspersed, and from which St. Paul himself was not exempted: and having dressed the sentiments of his adversary in the most odious colours, he found it no hard task, to expose him to infamy. The learned monk undertook to defend himself in writing, and proposed the subject to the consideration of the most able men of his time, and, to the great credit and authority of his adversary, he opposed the renowned name of Augustine. Soon after this he was condemned in a synod held at Mentz, where Rabanus observing that the monk was of the diocese of Soisons, which was subject to Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, sent Gotteschalcus to him, calling him a vagabond, and declaring that he had seduced many persons, who had become less careful for their salvation, since they had learned from him to say, why should I labor for my salvation? If I am predestinated to damnation, I cannot avoid it; and on the contrary, if I am predestinated to salvation, of whatever sins I am guilty, I shall certainly be saved. This objection to the wholesome scripture doctrine of predestination, is not, however, admitted to be fallacious, by those who suffer their reason to be governed by the misrule of selfishness. This was the case with Hincmar, who entered fully into the views of Rabanas, and, in a council of bishops, examined Gotteschalcus, who still maintained his doctrine with firmness. On this account, the monk was condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, and ordered to be beaten with rods and imprisoned. He was, however, an injured man; for nothing was proved against him, except his adherence to the sentiments of Augustine, which were still held in estimation by the church. While he was whipped in the presence of Charles and the bishops with great severity, and given to understand that he must cast into the fire with his own hand a writing, in which he had made a collection of scripture texts to prove his opinion, being, at length, overpowered by his sufferings, he dropped the book into the flames. After this he was kept a close prisoner in a monastery, where Hincman still took pains to persuade him to retract his sentiments, but in vain. The injured pastor maintained, with his last breath, the doctrine for which he suffered, and died in prison in the year 870, and was denied christian burial. There were, however, men even in that age, who remonstrated loudly against the barbarity, with which he had been treated. Remigius, archbishop of Lyons, distinguished himself among these; and, in a council held at Valence, in the year 855, both Gotteschalcus and his doctrine were vindicated and defended. Two subsequent councils confirmed the decree. The churches of Lyons, Vienne, and Arles, formerly renowned for piety, vigorously supported the same sentiments: and it was apparent, that all relish for the doctrines of grace, was not lost in the church: Christ was still precious to many.

CHAPTER V.

The Propagation of the Gospel in this Century.

IN this century, the churches of the East and West, through the pride and ambition of the pontiffs of Rome and Constantinople, began to be separated from one another, and were never afterwards united. Both the East and the West were, indeed, full of idolatry and darkness, and seemed to vie with each other in supporting the kingdom of satan. Providence, however, made use of the ambitious spirit of the prelates for the more extensive spread of the gospel. In this chapter, all the information upon this subject is collected which could be extracted from an enormous mass of ecclesiastical rubbish; and also some evidences are presented of the progress of the good work among the nations which had been, in part, evangelized in the two last centuries.

Constantine, afterwards called Cyril, was born at Thessalonica, and was educated at Constantinople. He became one of the most active and useful missionaries of this century. To him providence opened a door of solid utility among the idolatrous nations.

The sister of Bogoris, king of the Bulgarians, a savage and barbarous people, having been taken captive in a military excursion, was brought to Constantinople, and there received christianity. Upon her return, to her own country, she gave evidence that her change in religion had been more than nominal. Seeing her brother, the king, enslaved to idolatry, she was struck with grief and compassion, and used the most cogent arguments in her power, to convince him of the vanity of his worship. Bogoris, was affected with her arguments, but was not prevailed on to receive the gospel, till, a famine and plague appearing in Bulgaria, she persuaded him to pray to the God of the christians. He did so, and the plague ceased. There was something so remarkable in the event, that Bogoris was induced to send to Constantinople for missionaries; and at length he, with many other people, received baptism. Cyrel and his devout brother Methodius were the instruments of these blessings to the Bulgarians. Bogoris had desired Methodius to draw him a picture. Methodius chose for his subject, the last judgment, and explained it. This is supposed to have induced the king to embrace christianity. The event happened about the year 861. Pope Nicolas, to extend his own influence, sent bishops among the Bulgarians, who preached and baptized throughout the country: and Bogoris despatched his son with many lords to Rome, and entreated the Pope to send pastors into Bulgaria. The word of God and the name of Christ were hereby introduced among them. These transactions took place about the year 866.

About the same time, Cyril and his brother Methodius, labored also on the banks of the Danube, among the Sclavonians and the Chazari. The Cham and his whole nation were baptized: and Cyril gave a noble proof of his disinterestedness in refusing those presents which the munificence of the prince would have heaped upon him. Among the Chazavi he taught christianity with great success. Finding this people without letters, he invented an alphabet for their use, and translated the sacred books into the Sclavonian language.

After this, at the request of Bartilas, prince of Moravia, Cyril and Methodius went into that country, carried with them the Sclavonian gospel, taught the children the letters which they had invented, and instructed the people four years and an half. The king of Moravia was baptized with many of his subjects.—Cyril died a monk: Methodius was consecrated bishop of Moravia. The Sclavonian tongue, invented by those two missionaries, is, to this day, used in the liturgy of the Moravians. Bogoris, king of Bulgaria, gave up his crown about the year 880, and retired into a monastery. Methodius, after a long course of labors, died in an advanced age.

It appears that the Russians, hitherto barbarous and savage, about this time, received a christian bishop and listened to his instruction. About the year 867, certain provinces of Dalmatia sent an embassy to Constantinople, to request christian teachers to be sent among them. Their request was granted, and the pale of the church was extended through those provinces.

Frederic, nephew, to Boniface, the apostle of Germany, was appointed bishop of Utrecht. While dining with the emperor, Lewis the Meek, he was by him exhorted to discharge the duties of his office with faithfulness and integrity. The bishop, pointing to a fish on the table, asked whether it was proper to take hold of it by the head or by the tail. "By the head, to be sure," replied the emperor. "Then I must begin my career of faithfulness," answered Frederic, "with your majesty." He proceeded to rebuke the emperor for an incestuous connexion, which he openly maintained with Judith the empress; and, in the spirit of John the Baptist, told him, "that it was not lawful for him to have her." Lewis had not expected this salutation; and like Herod was not disposed to give up his Herodias. No sooner did the empress hear of this rebuke, than, in the true temper of an incensed adulteress, she began to plot the destruction of Frederic; and by the help of assassins, at last effected it. Frederic, being mortally wounded, insisted that no blood should be shed on his account, and died in a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the relations of Boniface. In him the Hollanders lost a faithful prelate. He was murdered about the year 833.

Let us now look to the north of Europe, and see, by what gradations Divine Providence paved the way for the propagation of the gospel in the frozen regions of Scandinavia, and on the shores of the Baltic, which had hitherto been inveloped in the most deplorable darkness of paganism.

Adelard, cousin german to Charlemagne, was a bright luminary in the christian world at the beginning of this century. He had been invited to the court in his youth: but fearing the infection of such a mode of life, had retired; and at the age of twenty years, became a monk of Corbie, in Picardy, and was chosen abbot of the monastery. His imperial relation, however, forced him again to attend the court, where he still preserved the disposition of a recluse, and took every opportunity, which business allowed, for private prayer and meditation. After the death of Charlemagne, he was, on unjust suspicions, banished by Lewis the Meek, to a monastery on the coast of Aquitain, in the isle of Here. After a banishment of five years, Lewis became sensible of his own injustice, and not only recalled him, but heaped on him the highest honors. The monk was the same man in prosperity and adversity, and in 823 obtained leave to return to Corbie. Here he labored abundantly, not only for the spiritual good of the monastery, but also for that of the country in its vicinity. Another Adelard, who had governed the monastery during his absence, by the direction of the first Adelard, prepared the foundation of a distinct monastery, called New Corbie, near Paderborn, beside the Weser, as a nursery for evangelical laborers, who should instruct the northern nations. The first Adelard completed the scheme, went twice to New Corbie, and settled its discipline. The success of this truly charitable institution was great: many learned and zealous missionaries were furnished from the new seminary; and it became a light to the north of Europe.

Adelard promoted learning in his monasteries, instructed the people both in Latin and French; and, after his second return from Germany to Old Corbie, died in 827, aged 73. Such is the account given us of Adelard. He appears to have been eminently pious, and the fruits of his labors to have been greater after his death than during his life. To convert monasteries into seminaries of pastoral education, was a thought far above the taste of the age in which he lived, and tended to emancipate those superstitious institutions from the unprofitable and illiberal bondage, in which they had been held for many generations.

In the year 814, Harold, king of Denmark, having been expelled from his dominions, implored the protection of the emperor Lewis, the son and successor of Charlemagne. That prince persuaded him to receive christian baptism: and foreseeing that Harold's reception of christianity would increase the difficulty of his restoration, he gave him a district in Friezeland for his present maintenance. Lewis, dismissing Harold to his country, enquired after some pious person who might accompany him, and confirm both the king and his attendants. But it was not easy to find a man disposed to undertake such a journey. At length Vala, abbot of Old Corbie, who had succeeded his brother Adelard, whose history has just been related, said to the emperor, "I have in my monastery, a monk, who earnestly wishes to suffer for the sake of Christ; a man of understanding and integrity, and peculiarly fitted for such a work. But I cannot promise, that he will undertake the journey." The emperor ordered him to send for the man; his name was Anscarius.—When the nature of the employment was opened to the monk, he professed his readiness to go. "I by no means command you," said Vala "to enter on so difficult and dangerous a service; I leave it to your option." Anscarius, however, persisted in his resolution. It was matter of surprise to many, that he should choose to expose himself among strangers, barbarians and pagans. Much pains were taken to dissuade him, but in vain. While preparations were making for his departure, Anscarius gave himself up to reading and prayer. This excellent monk had been employed as a teacher, both in Old and New Corbie, and had distinguished himself by his talents and virtues. Aubert, a monk of noble birth, a great confidant of Vala, and steward of his house, offered himself as a companion to Anscarius. Harold, with these, proceeded on his journey; but neither he nor his attendants, rude and barbarous in their manners, were at all solicitous for the accommodation of the missionaries, who therefore suffered much in the beginning of their journey. When the company arrived at Cologne, Hadebald, the archbishop, commisserating their condition, gave them a bark, in which they might convey their effects.—Harold, struck with the convenience of the accommodation, entered into the vessel with the missionaries, and they went down the Rhine into the sea, and came to the frontiers of Denmark. But Harold finding access to his dominions impossible, because of the power of those who had usurped the sovereignty, remained in Friezeland, in the district assigned to him by the emperor.

This king of Denmark seems to have been appointed by Divine Providence, only as an instrument to introduce Anscarius into the mission. For little more is known of him. The two French missionaries labored with zeal and success in Friezeland, both among christians and pagans. Harold sent some of his own slaves to be taught by them; and, in a little time, they had twelve children in their school.—Above two years they labored, and were made instruments of good to souls: after this Aubert ended his days by disease.

About the year 829, many Swedes having expressed a desire to be instructed in christianity, Anscarius received a commission from the emperor Lewis to visit Sweden. Another monk of Old Corbie, Vitmar by name, was assigned as his companion; and a pastor was left to attend on king Harold, in the room of Anscarius. In the passage, the two missionaries were met by pirates, who took the ship and all its effects.

On this occasion Anscarius lost the emperor's presents, and forty volumes, which he had collected for the use of the ministry. But his mind was still determined: and he and his partner, having with difficulty got to land, gave themselves up to the directions of Providence, and walked on foot a long way, now and then crossing some arms of the sea in boats. Such are the triumphs of faith and love! They arrived at Birca, from the ruins of which, Stockholm took its rise, though built at some distance from it. The king of Sweden received them favorably; and his council unanimously agreed to permit them to remain in the country, and to preach the gospel. Success attended their pious efforts. Many christian captives in Sweden rejoiced at the opportunity of the communion of saints which was now restored to them; and among others, Herigarius, governor of the city, was baptized. This man erected a church on his own estate, and persevered in the profession and support of the gospel.

After six months, the two missionaries returned, with letters written by the king's own hand, into France, and informed Lewis of their success. The consequence was, that Anscarius was appointed archbishop of Hamburg. This great city, being in the neighborhood of Denmark, was henceforth considered the metropolis of all the countries of the Elbe, which embraced christianity. The mission into Denmark, was at the same time attended to; and Gausbert, was sent to reside as a bishop in Sweden, where the number of christians increased.

Anscarius, by order of the emperor Lewis, went to Rome, to receive the confirmation of the new archbishopric of Hamburg. On his return to that city, he gained over many pagans, brought up children in the christian faith, and redeemed captives, whom he instructed and employed in the ministry. In the year 845, his faith was tried by a severe affliction. Hamburg was besieged, taken and pillaged by the Normans, and he himself escaped with difficulty. On this occasion, he lost all his effects: but his mind was so serene, that he was not heard to complain: "The Lord gave," said he, "and the Lord hath taken away." It was no inconsiderable addition to his sufferings, to hear, that Gausbert, whom he had sent into Sweden, was banished through a popular insurrection; in consequence of which, the work of the ministry was for some years, at a stand in that country. Anscarius, reduced to great poverty, and deserted by many of his followers, persisted still with unwearied patience, in the exercise of his mission in the north of Europe, till the bishopric of Bremen was conferred upon him.—Hamburg and Bremen were, from that time, considered as united in one diocese. It was not till some pains were taken to overcome his scruples, that Anscarius could be prevailed on to accept of this provision for his wants.

Sweden and Denmark were, under God, indebted to Anscarius, for the first light of the gospel. It is remarked of this wonderful person, that he never did any thing without first commending himself to God by prayer. It is true he was devoted to the Roman see, but we have no proof of his ever having practised or encouraged image worship. His labors and those of other missionaries deserve the highest commendations. In the year 865, this apostle of the North was called to his rest. Rembert, his confidant, was appointed bishop of Bremen, by his dying words. Rembert presided over the churches of the North, for 23 years, and established their discipline and ecclesiastical consistence. He lived not unworthy of the confidence of his predecessor, and died in the year 888, an example of piety.

The reader, it is hoped, has seen, in this dark century, a clear demonstration, that the church of Christ still existed. He may now behold it sunk to the ultimate point of depression.

CENTURY X.

CHAPTER I.

A General View of the Church.

THIS century abounded in all wickedness, and is remarkable above all others for the scarcity of writers, and men of learning. The vices and crimes of the popes were as deep and as atrocious as language can paint; nor can a reasonable man desire more authentic evidence than that, which the records both of civil and ecclesiastical history afford, concerning the corruption of the whole church. One pleasing circumstance, however, occurs to the mind of a genuine christian, which is, that all this was predicted. The book of the Revelation may justly be called a prophetic history of these transactions; and the truth of scripture is vindicated by events, of all others, the most disagreeable to a pious mind.

What materials then appear for the history of the real church? The propagation of the gospel among the pagan nations, and the review of some writers of this century form the principal subjects. But the general description of the situation of the church, can be little else than a very succinct enumeration of the means used to oppose the progress of popery.

The decrees of the council of Frankfort, against image worship, had still some influence in Germany, France and England. In the year 909, a council was held at Trosle, a village near Soissons in France, in which they expressed their sentiments of christian faith and practice, without any mixture of doctrine that was peculiarly popish. Many churches still had the scriptures in the vulgar tongue. The monks took much pains in the island of Great Britain, to erect an independent dominion on the ruin of the secular clergy. This scheme equally destructive of civil and clerical authority, met with a vigorous, and in a great measure, successful resistance, and the celibacy of the clergy, was strongly opposed. The doctrine of transubstantiation was still denied by many, and could not as yet gain a firm and legal establishment in Europe.

The Spirit of God was evidently still with the recent churches of Germany and the North; and France was by no means destitute of men, who feared God, and served him in the gospel of his Son.

The church of Rome had sunk to the lowest degradation in morals. She had even lost the appearance of virtue. Christianity, now trampled on by the most worthless prelates, immersed in profaneness, and sensuality, called for the healing aid of the civil magistrate. Otho I. emperor of Germany, came to Rome; and, by the united powers of the civil and military sword, reduced that capital into some degree of order and decorum. He put an end to the irregular and infamous customs of intruding into the popedom, and confirmed to himself and his successors the right of choosing the supreme pontiff in future. The consequence was, that a greater degree of moral propriety began to prevail in the papacy, though facts evince too plainly, that religious principle was still as much wanting as ever. The effect of Otho's regulation was, that the Popes exchanged the vices of the rake and the debauchee, for those of the ambitious politician and the hypocrite; and gradually recovered, by a prudent conduct, the domineering ascendency, which had been lost by vicious excesses. But this did not begin to take place till the latter end of the eleventh century. The Popes were rebuked, condemned and punished, but the popedom was still reverenced as much as ever. God had put it into the hearts of princes to fulfil his will and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until His words should be fulfilled. The Roman prelates, convinced of the necessity of more caution and propriety in the use of their power, recovered, by political artifice, what they had lost, and in the issue, became more terrible and pernicious than ever.

The efforts of Otho, to purify the church, to promote learning, to erect bishoprics, to endow churches, and to propagate the gospel among barbarous nations, were highly laudable. His exertions of this nature were so steady, and his private life so amiable, that there is reason to hope, he was himself a real christian. His empress was no less remarkable for her zeal and liberality.

In the West, the Normans, and in the East, the Turks, committed the most dreadful outrages on the church. In the island of Great Britain, nothing is found in all this period, but ignorance, superstition, and the ravages of northern barbarians. The state of France was not much different.

CHAPTER II.

The Propagation of the Gospel.

ON the decease of Charlemagne, the Hungarians, who had in his time, received some ideas of christianity, relapsed into the idolatries of their fathers, and the christian name among them was almost extinguished. But toward the middle of this century, two Hungarian chiefs, whose governments lay on the banks of the Danube, professed christianity and were baptized at Constantinople. Their names were Bologudes and Gylas. The former soon apostatized: the latter persevered, and encouraged the propagation of religion. The effects proved salutary among the Hungarians. The daughter of Gylas, having been given in marriage to Geysa, the chief prince of Hungary, prevailed on her husband to receive the gospel. Whether the king's conversion was real or nominal, the most salutary cosequences attended its reception by his subjects.

Humanity, peace, and civilization began to flourish among a people hitherto fierce and barbarous in the extreme. Stephen, the son of Geysa, was baptized, and became a more decisive defender of the faith than his father had been. Under Stephen, Hungary was almost wholly evangelized; and nothing was omitted by this zealous prince to establish christianity throughout his dominions.

Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, who visited Hungary toward the close of this century, was instrumental in aiding the benevolent exertions of this prince to instruct and christianize his subjects. He, too, travelled as a missionary into Poland, and planted the gospel in Dantzic, where his labors appear to have been crowned with success. In visiting a small island, he was knocked down with the oar of a boat; but recovering himself, made his escape, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and with his fellow laborers quitted the place. Indeed he was forced to flee for his life; but, he was at length murdered by barbarians, about the year 997. Siggo, a pagan priest, was the principal instrument of his death. Adalbert was one of the wisest and best of men, whom God raised up for the instruction of the human race; a man willing to labor and to suffer for Christ.

The labors of Gerard, bishop of Toul, in Germany, will also deserve to be mentioned. He was an eminent preacher; and often commissioned zealous pastors to officiate in country parishes. He cultivated learning among his disciples; but at the same time took care, so far as lay in his power, that they should apply themselves to devotion. That he would be very earnest in these pious efforts, will admit of no doubt, if it be true, that he declared, that he found more delight in heavenly exercises during one moment, than a worldly soul finds in worldly pleasures for a thousand years.

The church in Denmark now received a severe check from their king Gormo the III. who labored to extirpate the gospel there entirely. But his queen Tyra, who openly professed it, gave it all the support which lay in her power. The influence of the king prevailed, and the most of his subjects returned to idolatry. At length, Henry I. called the Fowler, the predecessor of the great Otho, led an army into Denmark; and through the terror of his arms, obliged Gormo to promise submission to the commands of the emperor. Under the protection of Henry, Unni, archbishop of Hamburg, came, with some faithful laborers, into Denmark and brought over many to the profession of Divine truth; but Gormo himself remained inflexible. Harald, his son, received the word with respect. The instruction of his mother, Tyra, doubtless had removed all prejudices from his mind. Unni, with the consent of Gormo, visited the islands, and formed christian churches. The king himself was allowed by his conqueror, to choose, whether he would receive christianity himself, or not; but he was prohibited from persecuting the faith, in his dominions: and thus by a singular concurrence of events, a sovereign prince was, by a foreign power, prevented from committing that evil among his subjects, to which his own inclinations would have led him. The labors of Unni were highly laudable, and providence smiled on his benevolent exertions to propagate truth and holiness. He visited Sweden and arrived at Birca, where he found that the gospel had become extinct; that for 70 years, no bishop, had appeared among them, except Reimbert, the successor of Anscarius. It pleased God there to give large success to the ministry of Unni. He fixed the gospel in Sweden, and planted it even in the remote parts of that northern region. At length Unni finished his glorious course at Birca, in the year 936. The savage disposition of the princes, and the confusion of the times had tended to obliterate the traces of Anscarius' labors: but, at length, Eric, the 8th king of Sweden, and still more, his son and successor, Olaus the second, favored the propagation of the gospel.

Eric requested the archbishop of Bremen to supply his kingdom with missionaries. In compliance with this request Adalvan and Stephen, persons of knowledge, integrity and piety, were sent to him. They, for a time, labored with much success; but the natural enmity of the human heart will exert itself against true piety, whatever be the form of government under which men live. The nobles of Sweden, being enraged at the restraints laid upon their licentiousness of manners, commenced a religious persecution against both the missionaries and the king. The former were beaten with rods, and expelled from Upsal: the latter was murdered on account of his piety. His son and successor Olous was not, however, discouraged from cherishing christianity, and his zeal and piety were crowned with success.

Thus were Sweden and Denmark, after a variety of changes, reduced into subjection to the form, and, no doubt, many individuals to the power, of the gospel. In the latter country, after the death of Henry I. the inhabitants refused to pay tribute to Otho the Great, his successor. This monarch obliged them to submit, and required Harold, the son and successor of Gormo, to receive christian baptism. All that we know of this prince induces the belief, that there was no reluctance on his part. He was baptized, together with his wife and little son, whose name had been Lueno; and in honor of the emperor, he was now called Luen-Otho. Harold, during the remainder of his life, took every wise and salutary method to propagate Divine truth among his subjects, and to restrain vice and immorality. Nor is it much to be doubted, that he would instruct his son Luen-Otho to act in the same manner, and labor to impress on his mind the power of that Divine religion which he himself seems to have felt. Be that as it may, Luen-Otho formed a junction with the chiefs of the country, who were offended at the pious zeal of Harold: in consequence of which the latter was murdered: and Luen-Otho, renounced even the name which had been imposed on him, persecuted the christians with great cruelty; and, for a time, gave a predominancy to the pagan interest in his dominions. It is, however, remarkable, that, like another Manasseh, in his affliction, Luen-Otho knew that the Lord was God. Being expelled from his throne, and forced to live in exile among the Scots, he was induced to remember the lessons of his childhood; repented of his crimes, and being restored to his throne, like the same Manasseh, labored to destroy the idolatry, which he had supported, and, in the latter part of his life, trode in the steps of his father.

In this century the light of the gospel penetrated into Norway. The idol Thor was dragged from its place and publicly burnt in the sight of its worshippers; and this country became christian, in the form of its religion, throughout. The Orkney Islands, then subject to Norway, also received the light of the gospel. Iceland and Greenland too were visited with the cheering rays of the Sun of righteousness. The triumph of christianity was complete throughout all Scandinavia. Poland, hitherto a barbarous country, became nominally christianized; and some in that country were hopefully made the subjects of real christianity. In all the barbarous countries where christian missionaries were received, their labors were found to be salutary. The dispositions of the barbarians were hereby gradually meliorated, and human society was improved.

Though the efforts of the tenth and three preceding centuries, did not always spring from pure motives, yet they formed the principal glory of those times. In many instances those efforts were evidently attended with the effusion of the Divine Spirit, and the genuine conversion of many pagans from their heathen vanities, to the love and practice of the truth as it is in Jesus.

CHAPTER III.

Writers and Eminent Men in this Century.

THOUGH God had not utterly forsaken the church yet true religion was now indeed low. Very few are to be found who deserve to be noticed for knowledge or for piety: Bruno, archbishop of Cologne was, however, eminent for both. He was brother to Otho I. and, by the desire of the people of Cologne, was fixed in that archbishopric. Otho invested his relation also with the civil power of a dukedom.—Bruno was a diligent promoter of religion. He brought over to the profession of christianity, Normans, Danes, and various others, who travelled in his province. The luxury of both clergy and people he restrained, and was himself a shining example of modest and frugal manners. Bruno died about the year 965.

Unni, archbishop of Hamburg, acted with a vigor and piety worthy of his station. It displays no common degree of christian zeal, that a person so opulent should choose to labor as a missionary in such rude and barbarous countries as Denmark and Sweden. He died at Stockholm in 936.

Adolvard, bishop of Verden, discharged the office of a faithful pastor, and took great pains to instruct the ignorant Vandals in the way of salvation.

Libentius, archbishop of Hamburg, showed himself possessed of the spirit of Unni, his pious predecessor, and often visited the Vandals, a barbarous people in Poland, and taught them the truths of the gospel. He sent pastors to distant nations, and was a shining example of piety and benificence. He died in 1013.

Some other rare lights shone during this dark night, by which the God of grace and mercy called, nourished and sanctified his church, and preserved to himself a godly seed in the earth, who served him in the gospel of his Son, and prevented the cruel tyranny of the prince of darkness from completely overspreading the world.

CENTURY XI.

CHAPTER. I.

A General View of the Church.

THE genuine church of Christ, under the protection and influence of her Supreme Head, existed in this century; but it would be in vain to attempt a regular and systematical history of her progress. Some particular circumstances in different parts of the christian world, some pious and successful endeavors to propagate the gospel in pagan countries, some degrees of opposition to the reigning idolatry and superstition, and some writings of pious and evangelical theologians, demonstrated that the spirit of God had not entirely forsaken the earth.

If this century excelled the last, it was in the improvements of learning. The arts and sciences revived, in a measure, among the clergy and the monks, but were not cultivated by any other set of men. I speak in regard to the Western church; for the Eastern, enfeebled and oppressed by the Turks and Saracens from without, and by civil broils and factions from within, with difficulty preserved that degree of knowledge, which in those degenerate days, still remained among the Greeks. I scarce find any vestiges of piety among the eastern christians at this time. So fatal was the influence of Mahometanism, and so judicially hardened were the descendents of those who first had honored the religion of Jesus. Constantinople was still called a christian city, and in learning and politeness, was superior to any part of the West: but it is in Europe we are to look for the emanations of piety. France and Italy excelled particularly in the cultivation of learning. Robert, king of France, the son and successor of Hugh Capet, who began to reign in 996, and died in 1031, distinguished himself as the friend of science. Even the ferocious Normans, whose wars and devastations were so terrible in Italy, France, and England, after they had established their respective governments, applied themselves, to the cultivation of the human mind, and diffused some light among the people whom they had subdued. This was particularly the case with the southern parts of Italy and with great Britain. William, the conqueror, savage and imperious as he was, restored letters to England, which, amidst the Danish depredations, had been almost extinguished. The learning itself was not philosophical, like that of modern times, but consisted chiefly of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. This was connected with divinity. The scriptures were held in high reputation. In such circumstances, to have learned to read, to have attended to the meaning of words, and to have employed the powers of the human mind, in any manner, on the sacred writings, were great blessings to mankind. In Italy and France there remained some witnesses of Divine truth, who opposed the abominations of the popedom.

Popery now reigned triumphant, and no public profession of the gospel, which claimed independence of its domination, could be endured in Europe.—The Saracens were then masters of Africa, and persecuted the christians there with great bitterness. The African christians were so infatuated with the love of sin, that they quarrelled among themselves, and, though they then had but two bishops, they betrayed one of those into the hands of the infidels, who greatly abused him.

He, who seriously reflects with what glory Asia and Africa once shone before God and his Christ; how dark and idolatrous, and, at the same time, how insensible of their spiritual misery, the inhabitants of those two quarters of the globe were in this century, and continue even to the present times, will see with what reverential care the jewel of the gospel should be cherished, while in our possession, lest we not only lose our own souls, but entail a curse on ages yet unborn.

CHAPTER II.

The Oppositon made to the Errors of Popery.

IN the year 1017, certain persons, real or supposed heretics, were discovered in France, who were said to hold, "that they did not believe, that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary; that he died for the salvation of mankind; that he was buried and rose again; that baptism procured the remission of sins; that the consecration by the priest constituted the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; and that it was profitable to pray to the martyrs and confessors." Other matters of a detestable nature were ascribed to them. On their refusal to recant before a council held at Orleans, 13 of them were burnt alive. It is not easy to say, what was the true character of these men. It is certain, that they opposed the reigning superstitions, and that they were willing to suffer for the doctrines which they espoused. The crimes alledged against them were so monstrous, and incredible, as to render the charges adduced against their doctrines very suspicious. That they, however, were truly evangelical christians, is what I dare not affirm.

In Flanders, some time after, there appeared another sect, which was condemned by a synod held at Arras, in the year 1025, by Gerard, bishop of Cambray and Arras. Concerning these, Gerard writes, that they travelled up and down to multiply converts, and that they had withdrawn many from the belief of the real presence in the sacrament; that they owned themselves to be the scholars of Gundulphus, who had instructed them in the evangelical and apostolical doctrine.—"This," said they, "is our doctrine, to renounce the world, to bridle the lusts of the flesh, to maintain ourselves by the labor of our own hands, to do violence to no man, and to love the brethren. If this plan of righteousness be observed, there is no need of baptism; if it be neglected, baptism is of no avail."[2] They particularly objected to the baptism of infants, because they were altogether incapable of understanding or confessing the truth. They denied the real presence of Christ's body in the Lord's supper; they rejected the consecration of churches, opposed various reigning superstitions, particularly the doctrine of purgatory and the practices connected with it. They likewise refused to worship the cross or any images whatever. Gerard, having examined their supposed errors, and, in his own opinion, confuted them, drew up a confession of faith, contrary to those errors, which he required the heretics to sign. As they did not well understand the Latin, he caused the confession to be explained to them in the vulgar tongue, by an interpreter; then, according to this account, they approved and signed the instrument, and were dismissed in peace by the bishop.

The nature of mankind, ever prone to run from one extreme to another, will easily account for the rejection of infant baptism. The practice had long been sullied by superstitious fooleries: the transition to its total rejection was natural. It does not appear that they denied the use of the Lord's supper but only the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the elements, and it is probable that they held baptism also in a similar manner. It cannot be doubted, but that, on the whole, they were of the true church of Christ. Faithfully to withstand idolatry and the reigning corruptions, required a light and strength far above nature; and they appeared to have been raised up to bear witness for the truth in that dark night of papal abominations.

CHAPTER III.

The Propogation of the Gospel.

THE work of christian piety, which had been successfully carried on in Hungary, was now crowned with still greater prosperity. Stephen, the king, who had begun to reign in the year 997, shewed himself a zealous patron of the gospel. His zeal was, indeed, much stimulated, by his pious queen. He often accompanied the preachers and pathetically exhorted his subjects. He suppressed barbarous customs, and restrained blasphemy, theft, adultery and murder.—The whole moral conduct of Stephen was admirable. His excellent code of laws is, to this day, the basis of the laws of Hungary. In this, he forbids all impiety, the violation of the duties of the Lord's Day, and irreverent behavior in the house of God. He lived to see all Hungary become externally christian; but christianity existed there, adulterated, or clouded by papal domination, and by the fashionable superstitions. Stephen died in the year 1038.

He was succeeded by Peter his nephew, who was banished by his subjects. Andrew, the cousin of Stephen, was now appointed king, on condition of restoring idolatry. Gerard, and three other bishops, endeavored to divert him from the design. But they were assaulted on the road by duke Vathas, a zealous pagan. Andrew, coming to the spot rescued one of the bishops, the other three had already fallen by the arm of the barbarian. This atrocious villany appears to have been overruled, by Him who causes the wrath of man to praise him, for the good of the church. The heart of Andrew was moved; he had seen in this instance the criminality of a believer in paganism. He examined christianity, received it, repressed idolatry, and reigned successfully.

The triumphs of the gospel in Denmark were very conspicuous. It was the preaching of the cross, attended with the energy of the Holy Spirit, which then effected a mighty revolution in the hearts of the Danes; a revolution, which, by the fruits it has produced has manifested itself to have been in favor of humanity. It is remarkable, that, to this day, no nation, in proportion to its abilities and opportunities, has exceeded the Danes, in labors for the propagation of the gospel. Christian godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. While it conducts enslaved souls into liberty, and, turns them from the power of Satan to God, ti invests them with the garments of salvation, meliorates their condition in this life, and diffuses, through the world, the most salutary precepts of peace, order, and tranquility. Let not men expect the general civilization of the world by any other methods. Our Savior has most fitly directed us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and every one who feels the genuine spirit of the gospel will devoutly obey the injunction.

CHAPTER IV.

The state of the Church in England.

IN the reign of Ethelred, a very cruel massacre of the Danes was, by royal order, made throughout his dominions. In this, no distinction was observed between the innocent and the guilty. Swein, king of Denmark, revenged this massacre, by repeated devastations and heavy exactions. Ethelred fled to Normandy to save his life, while his subjects felt all the miseries, which might be expected from incensed and victorious barbarians.

During these miseries, Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, fell into the hands of the Danes. He firmly expostulated with the infuriated barbarians, who exercised the most horrid cruelties, particularly on ladies of quality, whom they dragged to the stake and burnt to death, and who did not spare even infants. "The cradle" says he, "can afford no triumph to soldiers. It would be better for you to exercise your vengeance on me, whose death may give celebrity to your names. Remember, that some of your troops have, through my means, been brought over to the faith of Christ, and I have frequently rebuked you for your acts of injustice." Exasperated at these words, the Danes kept him a prisoner for seven months.—They then offered him his liberty on condition of immense payments to be made by himself and Ethelred the king. Alphage told them the sums were too large to be raised by any exactions, and firmly refused to drain the treasures of the church, for the sake of saving his life; accounting it wrong to give to pagans those sums which had been devoted to the honor of religion, and the relief of the poor. The merciless Danes, enraged beyond measure, threw him down and stoned him, while he prayed for his enemies, and for the church. None but a christian spirit could have conducted Alphage through such a scene, and supported him with so much fortitude and charity. He was murdered in the year 1013.

In the year 1017, the Danes brought the English into complete subjection. In 1041 the English threw off the Danish yoke; but soon sunk under the power of William the Norman, who in the year 1066, beheld himself sovereign of England.

Under William, the papal power soon reached the same height in England, which it had attained in France and Italy. This, the tyrant found to be a convenient support of his own despotic power: and while he took care that every one of his subjects should, in ecclesiastical matters, bow under the yoke of the bishop of Rome, he reserved to himself the supreme dominion in civil affairs, and exercised it with the most unqualified rigor. Lanfrano, whom he appointed archbishop of Canterbury, zealously supported the power of Rome, and the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation by his influence and authority. His successor, Anselm, was no less devoted to the Pope, and maintained several famous contests with his sovereign William Rufus, the son and successor of the conqueror. Anselm contributed much, by his influence, to settle the celibacy of the clergy of England; and it must be confessed, that even the virtues of this great man, through the peculiar infelicity of the times, were attended with great disadvantages to society. As to superstitious observances, his example had influence on others, and was injurious: his zeal, however, against luxury, simony and the vices of the great, was laudable, and his general defence of evangelical truth, adorned by an upright life and conversation, presered, under God, some genuine remains of piety in the nation.

CENTURY XII.

CHAPTER I.

A General View of the Life and Death of Bernard

AT the entrance of this century, we find Bernard, abbot of Clairval, rising with splendor, amid the general gloom. Though he was an ardent champion for the office and personal characters of the popes of Rome, yet he inveighed against the vices of the men, and the various evils of their ecclesiastical administration.—He strenuously supported their pretensions to St. Peter's chair, and combatted all who opposed those claims. *Forgive him this wrong:* it was common to him with the christian world!

At this time, the Mahometans were aiming at universal empire, and according to the Koran, all who were not with them in their creed, were continually threatened with the loss of their religion and their liberties; and, to live in slavery, under the Mahometan yoke, was all the indulgence granted to christians, who sunk beneath their arms. And as at this time, superstition had led many, under the semblage of religion, to undertake pilgrimages to the holy land, who were exposed to many insults, robberies and extortions, from the Mahometans; so, in the beginning of this century, prodigious armies marched out of Europe, to wrest the holy land out of the hands of the infidels, and Bernard used his utmost influence to encourage and promote this ill timed enterprize.

Early in life, Bernard subjected himself to the severest austerities, by which he, at length, was reduced to great weakness, and his health much impaired. But inwardly taught of God, as he advanced in the Divine life, he gradually learned to correct the harshness and asperity of his sentiments. He was humbled under a sense of his folly, and frankly confessed it, in the strongest terms. He then began to travel from place to place, and to preach, for the good of mankind. And it is wonderful to observe, with what authority he reigned in the hearts of men of all ranks, and how his word became a law to princes and nobles. His eloquence was, indeed, very great: but that alone could never have given him so extensive a dominion. His sincerity and humility were eminent, and his constant refusal of the least ecclesiastical dignities, gave an unequivocal testimony to the uprightness of his character. Though no potentate, either civil or ecclesiastical, possessed such real power as he did, in the christian world; and though he was the highest in the judgment of all men, yet was he, in his own estimation, the lowest. He said, and felt what he said, that, for the performance of the services for which he was so much extolled, he was wholly indebted to the influence of Divine grace. The talents of Bernard in preaching were, doubtless, of the first order. He possessed that variety of gifts, which fitted him either to address the great, or the vulgar.

Peter Abelard, was born in Brittany, in the year 1079. He was a man of genius, industry and learning; by nature, confident and presumptuous, elated with applause, and far too haughty to submit to the simple truth, as it is revealed in scripture: from the moment, that he applied himself to the study of the sacred writings, he was ardently disposed to heretical singularities. He advocated certain sentiments, subversive of the truth as it is in Jesus, and which were calculated to foster the pride and selfsufficiency of the human heart. Bernard took the most active and effectual measures to counteract his errors, and to support the soul humbling doctrines of the cross; and, at length, after much exertions, procured the definitive sentence of the Pope against Abelard, who ordered his books to be burned, and the heretic himself to be confined to a monastery. He was permitted to end his days in that of Cluni, over which Peter the venerable, presided, who treated him with much compassion and friendship. Not personal malice, but christian zeal, seems to have influenced Bernard in the whole of this transaction.

In this century, there were numerous opposers of the reigning idolatry and superstitions of the church of Rome, who were denominated, by their enemies, Cathari; they, as to worldly property, were in low circumstances, and in general, mechanics. Cologne, Flanders, the south of France, Savoy, and Milan, were their principal places of residence. These appear to have been a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious sect of christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the fashionable idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the Divine word. They seem to have conformed to the public worship, much in the same manner, as the apostles did to the Jewish church, while it existed, still preserving a union among themselves in worship, and in hearing sermons, so far as the iniquity of the times would permit.

This people continued in a state of extreme persecution throughout this century. Bernard, who seems to have been extremely ill informed concerning them, remarks, that they had no particular father of their heresy, and condemns them in whatever respects they stood opposed to the high claims and superstitions of the church of Rome. We cannot, however, find that he ever opposed their real piety.

Bernard lived in an age so ignorant and superstitious, that protestants are ready to ask, can any good come out of the twelfth century? His writings show him to have been a man of humble and fervent piety. True, he censured some, "of whom the world was not worthy," but, of their true character, he was ignorant. He was deeply tinged with a predilection for the Roman hierarchy, had imbibed most of those errors of his time, which were not subversive of the gospel; and the monastic character, which, according to the spirit of the age, appeared to be the greatest glory, seems to have much eclipsed his real virtues, and to have prevented his progress in true evangelical wisdom. But with all his faults, the real christian shines forth in Bernard's life and death. The love of God seems to have taken deep root in his soul, and to have been always steady and ardent. He was about 63 years old when he died, of a disease in his stomach. A letter which he dictated to a friend, a very few days before his decease, will be worthy of our attention, as a genuine monument of that simplicity, modesty, and piety, which had adorned his conversation. "I received your love, with affection, I cannot say with pleasure; for what pleasure can there be to a person in my circumstances, replete with bitterness? To eat nothing solid, is the only way to preserve myself tolerably easy. My sensative powers admit of no further pleasure. Sleep hath departed from my eyes, and prevented the least intermission of my pain. Stomachic weakness is, as it were, the sum total of my afflictions. By day and night, I receive a small portion of liquids. Every thing solid, the stomach rejects.—The very scanty supply, which I now and then receive, is painful; but perfect emptiness would be more so. If now and then I take in a large quantity, the effect is most distressing. My legs and feet are swoln as in a dropsy. In the midst of these afflictions, that I may hide nothing from an anxious friend, in my inner man, (I speak as a vulgar person) the spirit is ready, though the flesh be weak. Pray ye to the Savior, who willeth not the death of a sinner, that he would not delay my timely exit, but that still he would guard it. Fortify with your prayers a poor unworthy creature, that the enemy who lies in wait, may find no place where he may fix his tooth, and inflict a wound. These words have I dictated, but in such a manner, that ye know my affection by a hand well known to you." Such were the condition and temper of this excellent saint at the approach of death.—Thus, may we hope, that Bernard, through faith and patience, did, at length, inherit the promises.

CHAPTER II.

General State of the Church in this Century.

SUPERSTITION, idolatry, frivolous contentions, and metaphysical nicities, attended with a lamentable want of true piety and virtue, form almost the whole of the religious phenomina in the East.

Just at the close of the last century, pope Urban held a Synod of 150 bishops, to promote the crusades, and exhorted the christian world to concur in supporting the same cause. He died in the year 1099, and

Jerusalem was taken by the crusaders in the same year. The pale of the visible church was extended, by the conquest of the Western warriors, and several episcopal sees were again formed in regions, whence the light of the gospel had first arisen to bless mankind. But these were of short duration: and, what is much more material to be observed, while they continued, gave no discernible evidence of the spirit of true religion. This is a circumstance which throws a very unpleasent shade on the whole character of the fanatical war, which, at that time, agitated both Europe and Asia. Among its thousand evils, this was one, *indulgences were now diffused by the popes through Europe*, for the purpose of promoting what they called the holy war. These had indeed been sold before by the inferior dignitaries of the church, who, for money, remitted the penalties imposed on transgressors; they had not, however, pretended to abolish the punishments which await the wicked in a future state. This impiety was reserved to the Pope himself, who dared to usurp the authority which belongs to God alone. The corruption having once taken place, remained and increased from age to age, till it was checked by the reformation. The whole discipline of the church was now dissolved, and men, who had means to purchase a licence to sin, were emboldened to let loose the reins of vice, and to follow at large, their own desires and imaginations.

In this season of religious declension, attempts were, however, made to promote human learning; indeed, the laudable passion for intellectual improvement was strong in this century. The human mind acquired a new tone and vigor; but learning could not communicate grace, nor bring men to see the folly of enslaving themselves to the popedom. The influence of the bishop of Rome became prodigious; the emperors of Germany trembled under the rod; and some of the bravest and wisest of the English princes were found unequal to a contest with the hierarchy.

Where THEN was the church of Christ, and what was its condition? In the general appearance of national religion, she was not to be discovered. God had, however, his SECRET ONES. In the West the Cathari appear then to have lived the religion of Jesus. They formed societies among themselves. These increased exceedingly, and toward the close of the century, were exposed to the unrighteous indignation of the reigning powers, both in church and state, and were known by the name of Waldenses. Thus, the church of Christ had a real existence in the West, and shone as a light in a dark place. In the East it is extremely difficult to discover the least vestiges of genuine piety, unless it be in some small degrees of it among the Paulicians.

In a council held at London, in 1108, a decree was issued against clerks, who should cohabit with women. This council did not, however, mean to give an attestation to the truth of the prophecy of St. Paul, concerning the apostacy of the latter days, one circumstance of which was the prohibition of marriage, but they fulfilled the prophecy in the clearest manner. The voice of natural conscience and of common sense, was by no means, altogether silenced during this gloomy season. Fluentius, bishop of Florence, taught publicly, that Antichrist was born, and come into the world. On account of this, pope Paschal II. held a council there in the year 1105, reprimanded the bishop, and enjoined him to be silent on the subject.

The Island of Great Britain was rapidly sinking all this century, into a deplorable state of subjection to the Roman see. In the year 1159 thirty men and women, who were Germans, appeared in England, and were afterward brought before a council of the clergy at Oxford. Gerard their teacher, a man of learning, said, that they were christians, and believed the doctrine of the apostles. They expressed an abhorrence of the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, and of the invocation of the saints. Henry II, in conjunction with the council, ordered them to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through Oxford, to have their clothes cut short by their girdles, and to be turned into the open fields; and no person to shelter or relieve them, under severe penalties. It was then the depth of winter, and they all lost their lives by cold and hunger. They had made one female convert in England, who, through fear of similar punishment, recanted. The whole number of the Germans remained patient, serene, and composed, repeating, "Blessed are those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Their teacher, Gerard, that he might be distinguished from the rest, had an additional mark on his chin.

What darkness must at that time have filled the island of Great Britain! A wise and sagacious king, a renowned university, the whole body of the clergy and laity, all united in expelling Christ from their coasts! This account, though brief, is sufficiently explicit to show that these were the martyrs of Christ. Most probably driven from home by persecution, they had brought the light and power of the gospel into England with them; and so totally corrupt and senseless was the nation, that none received it. It deserves to be noticed, that England was afterward, for a long time, exposed to suffer more severely, than most other nations, from the exactions of the popedom.

Antichrist, then reigned calm and victorious throughout Europe. Nevertheless, even in Italy itself, some suspicions of his existence appeared. Joachim, abbot of Calabria, a man renowned for learning and piety, asserted that Antichrist was born in the Roman state, and would be exalted to the apostolic see. King Richard I. of England, being at Messina in Sicily, going upon his expedition to the holy land, sent for Joachim, and with much satisfaction heard him explain the book of the Revelation, and discourse of Antichrist.

If Richard had been as earnest in studying the scriptures, as he was in conducting his romantic expedition into the holy land, by comparing the apocalyptic prophecies with the treatment which he himself received from the Pope, he might have understood that the bishop of Rome was Antichrist. For, in a bull, dated 1197, Innocent III. declared, that it was not fit, that any man should be invested with authority, who did not revere and obey the holy see. In another bull, addressed to Richard, he told him, that if he opposed the decrees of the apostolic see, he would soon convince him, how hard it was to kick against the pricks. In another bull, Innocent declared, that he would not endure the least contempt of himself, or of God, whose place he held on earth, but would punish every disobedience without delay, and without respect of persons; and would convince the whole world, that he was determined to act like a sovereign. The "lion-hearted" Richard obeyed his decrees, and gave up his opposition, in the cause which he had contested. Innocent reigned in England with a power little less than despotic. This was the pope, who confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation in the grossest sense; reduced the two succeeding princes, John and Henry III. to a state of the lowest vassalage, and enriched his creatures with the treasures of England.

CHAPTER III.

The Propagation of the Gospel.

THE pale of the visible church was still farther extended in this century among the idolatrous nations; and, though the methods of propagating divine truth were too often unchristian, some missionaries seem to have been actuated by an apostolical spirit. The articles under this head are few, but well deserve the reader's attention.

Boleslaus, duke of Poland, having taken Stetin, the capital of Pomerania, by storm, and laid waste the country by fire and sword, compelled the remaining inhabitants to submit at discretion. From these inauspicious beginnings Pomerania was made acquainted with christianity. For three years, the conqueror endeavored to procure pastors and teachers from his own dominions, to instruct his new subjects; but could find none. He then engaged Otho, bishop of Bamberg, in the work. The duke of Pomerania met the bishop on his approach, and received him with much respect. The savage inhabitants were, however, with difficulty prevented from murdering him. Otho was firm, and by christian zeal, patience, and meekness, labored to efface the disadvantageous impressions, which the military expeditions of Boleslaus, could not fail to have made on their minds. The duchess of Pomerania, with her female attendants, received the gospel. So did the duke with his companions, and he gave this evidence of sincerity, that he was prevailed on by the instructions of Otho to dismiss his concubines, who were twenty four in number. This missionary was afterward fiercely assaulted by some of the inhabitants, and with great difficulty escaped. Otho bore the injury so meekly, and persevered in his labors with such evident marks of probity and charity, that he at length established the form of christianity among them. He commenced his mission in the year 1123, and from his success, was styled the apostle of the Pomeranians. After he had carried the gospel to the remote districts, he returned to the care of his own flock at Bamberg, where he died in 1139. That the work, however, was very slight among this people, appeared too plainly by the event. The Pomeranians soon after ejected the christian pastors, and re-established the idolatry of their ancestors.

The inhabitants of Rugen, an island which lies in the neighborhood of Pomerania, were remarkable for their obstinate opposition to christianity. Eric, king of Denmark, subdued them; and, among other conditions of peace, imposed on them his religion. But they soon renounced it for their ancient idolatry.—At length Waldemar, king of Denmark, having subjected them again, obliged them to deliver up to him their idol Swanterwith, which he ordered to be hewn in pieces and burned. He compelled the vanquished also to deliver to him all their sacred money, and released the christian captives whom they held in slavery, and converted the lands which had been assigned to the pagan priests, to the support of the christian ministry. Also he furnished the ignorant savages with pastors and teachers. Among these, shone Absalom, archbishop of Lunden, by whose pious labors, the gospel received an establishment in this island, which had so long baffled every attempt to evangelize it. Absalom ought to be ranked among those genuine benefactors of mankind, who are willing to spend and be spent for the good of souls. Even Jaremar, the prince of Rugen, received the gospel, and not only taught his wayward subjects by his life and example, but also by his useful instructions and admonitions. Sometimes he employed menaces, but to what degree, and with what circumstances is not known. Certain it is, that the people of Rugen from that time, were in some sense, at least, evangelized. No people had ever shown a more obstinate aversion to the doctrines of christianity; nor were the military proceedings of Eric and Waldemar calculated to soften their animosity. In this article, however, as in the last, the characters of the missionaries ought to be distinguished from those of the princes; for, in the accounts of both the missionaries there appears very good evidence of a genuine propagation of godliness. These events in Rugen took place about the year 1168. When the characters of princes are distinguished from that of missionaries, it is by no means intended that the conduct of the former was unjustifiable. The people of Rugen were a band of pirates and robbers; and it is not improbable, but that the right of self-preservation might have authorized the Danish expedition.

The Finlanders were of the same character with the people of Rugen, and infested Sweden with their incursions. Eric, king of the last mentioned country, vanquished them in war, and is said to have wept, because his enemies died, unbaptized. As soon as he was master of Finland, he sent Henry, bishop of Upsal, to evangelize the barbarians. The success of this missionary was great, and he is called the apostle of the Finlanders, though he was murdered, at length, by some of the refractory people. He was stoned to death at the instigation of a murderer whom he had endeavored to reclaim by his censures.

Eric was excellent both as a christian and a king. His piety provoked the derision of some impious malcontents, by whom he was attacked, while employed in public worship. "The remainder of the festival" said he, "I shall observe elsewhere." It was the feast of the ascension, which he was celebrating. He went out alone to meet the murderers, that he might prevent the effusion of blood, and died commending his soul to God.

CENTURY XIII.

CHAPTER I.

Peter Waldo.

THE Cathari, who were evidently a people of God, received great accessions of members from the learned labors and godly zeal of Peter Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons, toward the close of the twelfth century. They were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecution, and exhibited a spectacle, both of the power of Divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real gospel of Jesus Christ. I purpose to represent in one connected view, the history of this people till a little after the time of their reformation. The spirit, doctrine, and progress of the Waldenses, will be more clearly understood by this method, than by broken and interrupted details; and the 13th century seems the most proper place in which their story should be introduced.

These people were numerous in the valleys of Piedmont. Hence the name Vaudois, or Vallenses was given them, particularly to those who inhabited the valleys of Lucerne and Argrogne. A mistake arose from similarity of names, that Peter Valdo or Waldo, was the first founder of these churches. For the name Vallenses being easily changed into Waldenses, the Romanists improved this very easy and natural mistake into an argument against the antiquity of these churches, and denied that they had any existence till the appearance of Waldo. During the altercations of the papists and protestants, it was of some consequence that this matter should be rightly stated; because the former denied that the doctrines of the latter had any existence till the days of Luther. But from a just account of the subject, it appeared, that the real protestant doctrines existed during the dark ages of the church, long before Waldo's time.

About 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men. This led to idolatry. Men fell down before the consecrated host and worshipped it as God. The impiety of this abomination shocked the minds of all men who were not dead to a sense of true religion. The mind of Peter Waldo was aroused to oppose the abomination, and to strive for a reformation. A fear of God, in union with an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, led him to conduct with courage in opposing the dangerous corruptions of the hierarchy. He abandoned his mercantile occupation, ditributed his wealth to the poor, and exhorted his neighbors to seek the bread of life. The poor, who flocked to him to share his alms, received the best instruction he was capable of communicating, and reverenced the man, of whose liberality they partook, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

A secular man like Waldo needed instruction. But where could it be found, at a time of such general ignorance and declension? He knew that the scriptures were given as infallible guides, and thirsted for those sources of instruction, which, at that time, were in a great measure a sealed book in the christian world. To men who understood the Latin tongue, they were accessible. But how few were these compared with the bulk of mankind! The Latin vulgate bible was the only edition of the sacred book at that time in Europe: and, the languages then in common use, the French and others, however mixed with the Latin, were, properly speaking, by this time separate and distinct from it. It appears that the christian world under Providence, was indebted to Waldo, for the first translation of the bible into a modern tongue. No pains had been taken, by those who were attached to the popish system, to diffuse biblical knowledge among the vulgar. The benevolent attempt to send the bread of life among the common people, by giving them the scriptures in their own language, if we except the single instance of the Sclavonian version, was purely and exclusively of protestant origin.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the scriptures, he saw that the general practice of nominal christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only, no foundation in the Divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the Pope. He did more: as he advanced in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Christ, he taught his neighbors the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

John de Beles Mayons, archbishop of Lyons, a distinguished member of the corrupt system, forbade the new reformer to teach any more, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as an heretic. Waldo replied, that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter which concerned the salvation of men. On this, the archbishop endeavored to apprehend him. But the great affection of Waldo's friends, the influence of his relations, who were men of rank, the universal regard paid to his probity and piety, and the conviction which, no doubt many felt, that the extraordinary circumstances justified his assumption of the pastoral character; all things operated so strongly in his favor, that he lived concealed at Lyons three years.

Pope Alexander III. having heard of the proceedings of Waldo, anathamatized him and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against them with the utmost rigor.

Waldo fled from Lyons, and his disciples followed him. By this dispersion, the doctrine of Waldo was widely disseminated throughout Europe. In Dauphiny, whither he retired, his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people probably did join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the bible, was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people. Waldo himself, however, seems never to have been among them. Persecuted from place to place, he retired into Picardy. Success still attended his labors; and the doctrines which he preached, appear to have so harmonized with those of the Vaudois, that they and his people were henceforward considered as the same.

To support and encourage the church of Christ, formed no part of the glory of the greatest and wisest princes of that age. Philip Augustus, one of the most prudent and sagacious princes that France ever saw, was enslaved by the god of this world. He took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down 300 houses belonging to those who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burned. It appears that, at this time, Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia, where he ended his days about the year 1179. He appears to have been one, of whom the world was not worthy, and to have turned many unto righteousness. The word of God then grew and multiplied. In Alsace and along the Rhine the gospel was preached with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit: persecution ensued, and 35 citizens of Nantz were burned at one fire, in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz, 18. In those persecutions, the bishop of Mentz was very active, and the bishop of Strasburg was not inferior to him in vindictive zeal; for, through his means, 80 persons were burned at that place. Every thing relating to the Waldenses resembled the scenes of the primitive church. Numbers died praising God, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection; whence the blood of the martyrs became again the seed of the church; and in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, churches were planted, which flourished in the 13th century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassone, a city not far from Toulouse, which might be called in those days, the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth. In Bohemia and the country of Passaw, the churches were reckoned to have contained in the former part of the 14th century eighty thousand professors. Almost throughout Europe Waldenses were then to be found; and yet they were treated as the off-scouring of the earth, and as people against whom all the power and wisdom of the world were united. But "the witnesses continued to prophesy in sackcloth," and souls were built up in the faith, hope, and charity of the gospel.

CHAPTER II.

The real Character of the Waldenses.

HERE we are justly called on to vindicate the claim, which this people made to the honorable character of the church of God. In times of great declension, whoever is led by the spirit of God to revive true religion, necessarily exposes himself to the invidious charges of arrogance, uncharitableness and self-conceit. By condemning all others, such an one provokes the rest of the world to observe and investigate his faults. These disadvantages the Waldenses had in common with other reformers; they had also disadvantages peculiarly their own. Power, knowledge, and learning, were almost entirely in the hands of their adversaries: In them very particularly, God Almighty chose the weak and foolish things of the world, to confound the wise. As they were, for the most part, a plain and illiterate people, they furnished no learned divines, no profound reasoners, nor able historians. The vindication, therefore, of their claims to the character of a true church must be drawn principally from the holiness of their lives and the patience of their sufferings.

Rainerius, the cruel persecutor, owns that the Waldenses frequently read the holy scriptures, and in their preaching cited the words of Christ and his apostles concerning love, humility, and other virtues; insomuch that the women who heard them, were enraptured with the sound. He further says, that they taught men to live, by the words of the gospel and the apostles; that they led religious lives; that their manners were seasoned with grace, and their words prudent; that they freely discoursed of divine things, that they might be esteemed, good men. He observes likewise, that they taught their children and families the epistles and gospels. Claude, bishop of Turin, wrote a treatise against their doctrines, in which he candidly owns, that they themselves were blameless, without reproach among men, and that they observed the Divine commands with all their might.

Jacob de Riberia says, that he had seen peasants among them who could recite the book of Job by heart; and several others, who could perfectly repeat the whole New Testament.

The bishop of Cavaillon once obliged a preaching monk to enter into conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood be prevented. This happened during a great persecution in 1540, in Merindol and Provence. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that he had never known in his whole life so much of the scriptures, as he had learned during those few days, in which he had held conferences with the heretics.—The bishop however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men, who had lately come from the Sorbonne, at Paris, which was renowned for theological subtilty. One of them openly owned, that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children in their catechism, than by all the disputations which he had ever heard. This is the testimony of Vesembecius in his oration concerning the Waldenses. The same author informs us farther, that Lewis XII. importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence, to make inquiries. They reported, that in visiting all their parishes and temples, they found no images or Roman ceremonies, but, that they could not discover any marks of the crimes with which they were charged; that the sabbath was strictly observed; that children were baptized according to the rules of the primitive church, and instructed in the articles of the christian faith, and the commandments of God.—Lewis having heard the report, declared with an oath, "they are better men than myself or my people."

We must add here the testimony of that great historian, Thuanus, an enemy indeed to the Waldenses, though a fair and candid one.

He is describing one of the valleys inhabited by this people in Dauphiny, which is called the stoney valley. "Their clothing," he says, "is of the skins of sheep; they have no linen. They inhabit seven villages: their houses are constructed of flint stone, with a flat roof covered with mud, which being spoiled or loosened by rain, they smooth again with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however by a fence. They have besides two caves, set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other, themselves, when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being by constant practice, excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live separate from the rest of mankind. One thing is astonishing, that persons externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They can all read and write. They are acquainted with French so far as is needful for the understanding of the bible, and the singing of psalms. You can scarce find a boy among them, who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith which they profess; in this, indeed, they resemble their brethren of the other valleys: they pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligation of this duty is particularly noted in the confession of their faith. If by reason of the civil wars, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and at the first opportunity pay it to the king's tax-gatherers."

Francis I. the successor of Lewis XII. received, on inquiry, the following information concerning the Waldenses of Merindol, and other neighboring places: namely, that they were a laborous people, who came from Piedmont to dwell in Provence, about 200 years ago: that they had much improved the country by their industry; that their manners were most excellent; that they were honest, liberal, hospitable, and humane; that they were distinct from others in this, that they could not bear the sound of blasphemy, or the naming of the devil, or any oaths, except on solemn occasions; and that if they ever fell into company where blasphemy or lewdness formed the substance of the discourse, they instantly withdrew themselves. Such are the testimonies to the character of this people from enemies!

Luther, who owns that he was once prejudiced against them, testifies that he understood by their confessions and writings, that they had been for ages singularly expert in the use of the scriptures. He rejoiced and gave thanks to God, that he had enabled the reformed and the Waldenses, to see and own each other as brethren. By the general confession of the Romanists, it appears, that the protestants and the Waldenses, were looked on as holding the same principles. The churches of Piedmont were, however, on account of their superior antiquity, regarded as guides of the rest, insomuch, that when two pastors, who had been sent by them into Bohemia, acted with perfidy, and occasioned a grievous persecution; still the Bohemians ceased not to desire pastors from Piedmont, only they requested, that none but persons of tried characters might be sent to them in future.

From the borders of Spain, throughout the South of France for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to Bohemia, thousands of godly souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ, against whom malice could say no evil, except that which admits the most satisfactory refutation: men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of godliness itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the church. But of what church? Of that, which in the 13th century, and long before, had shown itself to be Antichristian. How faithful is the promise of God in supporting and maintaining a church, even in the darkest times! but her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on earth.

The Waldenses were conscientiously obedient to established governments, and their separation from a church, so corrupt as that of Rome, was with them only a matter of necessity. We shall now see what they were in point of doctrine and discipline.

CHAPTER III.

The Doctrine and Discipline of the Waldenses.

THE leading principle of this church was, "that we ought to believe that the holy scriptures alone contain all things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God hath revealed to us." Wherever this principle dwells in the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry. There the worship of one God, through the one Mediator, and by the influence of one Holy Spirit, is practised sincerely. The dreams of purgatory, the intercession of saints, the adoration of images, dependence on relics and austerities, cannot stand before the doctrine of scripture. The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principle of protestantism.—

"They affirm, that there is only one Mediator, and therefore that we must not invocate the saints. That there is no purgatory; but that all those, who are justified by Christ, go into life eternal."

A number of their old treatises evince, that for some hundred years, the principles of the gospel, which alone can produce such holiness of life as the Waldenses exhibited in their conduct, were professed, understood, and embraced by this chosen people, while Antichrist was in the very height of his power.

In a book concerning their pastors we have this account of their vocation.

"All who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God, that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David and the prophets. Afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands.—The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors; nor are the seniors to undertake any thing without the approbation of their colleagues, that every thing may be done among us in order. We pastors meet together once every year, to settle our affairs in a general synod. Those whom we teach, afford us food and raiment with good will, and without compulsion. The money given us by the people is carried to the said general synod, is there received by the elders, and is applied partly to the supply of travellers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us shall fall into gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching."

The Waldenses in general expressed their firm belief that there is no other mediator than Jesus Christ: they spake with great respect of the virgin Mary as holy, humble, and full of grace; at the same time they totally discountenanced that senseless and extravagant admiration, in which she had been held for ages. They asserted, that all, who have been and shall be saved, have been elected of God before the foundation of the world; and that whosoever upholds free-will, absolutely denies predestination, and the grace of God. By an upholder of free-will, they undoubtedly meant one, who maintains that there are resources in the nature of man sufficient to enable him to live to God as he ought, without any need of the renewal of his nature by divine grace.

They gave a practical view of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, perfectly agreeable to the faith of the orthodox in all ages. Of the nature and use of the sacraments, they expressed the common sentiments of the protestant churches. The labors of Claudius, of Turin, in the ninth century, appear, under God, to have produced these blessed effects as to the faith, and honess of the Waldenses. Men, who spend and are spent for the glory of God, and for the profit of souls, have no conception of the importance of their efforts. These often remain in durable effects, to succeeding generations, and are blessed for the emancipation of thousands from the dominion of sin and Satan.

The Waldenses took special care for the religious instruction of their children, by catechetical and expository tracts, adapted to the plainest understandings. These formed a very salutary body of instruction, and early taught the youth the great things which pertained to life and godliness. If no more could be said for this people, than that they hated the gross abominations of popery, and condemned the vices of the generality of mankind, they might have been ostentatious Pharisees, or self-sufficient Socinians. But though, no doubt, there were unsound professors among them, as among all other denominations yet in their community, there were many real christians, who knew how to direct the edge of their severity against their indwelling sins; and who being truly humbled under a view of their native depravity, betook themselves wholly to the grace of God in Christ for salvation.

It is clearly evident from the general current of their history, that the Waldenses were a humbled people, prepared to receive the gospel of Christ from the heart, to walk in his steps, to carry his cross, and to fear sin above all other evils. They were devoutly strict in the discharge of family religion. In some ancient inquisitorial memoirs, describing their names and customs, it is said of them ; "Before they go to meat, the elder among them says, God, who blessed the five barley loaves and two fishes in the wilderness, bless this table, and that which is set upon it, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And after meat, he says, the God, who has given us corporal food, grant us his spiritual life, and may God be with us, and we always with him. After their meals, they teach and exhort one another."

There were evidently many humble and devout followers of Christ among this people, who felt the power and enjoyed the consolations of the doctrines of the cross.

CHAPTER IV.

The Persecutions of the Waldenses.

THE external history of this people is little else than a series of persecution. And it is to be regretted, that while we have large and distinct details of the cruelties they endured, we have very scanty accounts of the spirit, with which they suffered ; and still less of the internal exercises of holiness, which are known only to the people of God. That which raged against them in the former part of the 13th century, was an assemblage of every thing cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable. This was a time when the princes of the earth, as well as the meanest persons, were generally enslaved to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God with the most savage barbarity. In 1179, some, under various pretexts of their having embraced heretical sentiments, were examined by the bishops and condemned. They were accused of receiving only the New Testament, and of rejecting the Old, except in the testimonies quoted by our Lord and the apostles. This charge is, however, confuted by the whole tenor of their authentic writings. They were also accused of asserting the Manichean doctrine of two independent principles; of denying the utility of infant baptism, and of many other things, and all with an evident design to persecute them to death; because they stood opposed to the errors and abominations of the church of Rome.

Rainerius, who was a bigoted papist, owns, that the Waldenses were the most formidable enemies of the church of Rome, "because," saith he, "they have a great appearance of godliness; because they live righteously before men, believe rightly in God in all things, and hold all the articles of the creed; yet they hate and revile the church of Rome; and, in their accusations they are easily believed by the people."

But it was reserved to Innocent the third, than whom no pope ever possessed more ambition, to institute the inquisition; and the Waldenses were the first objects of its cruelty. He authorized certain monks to frame the process of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular power. The beginning of the 13th century saw thousands of persons hanged or burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was, that they trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteousness, idolatry and superstition. Whoever has attended closely to the subject of the epistles to the Colossians and Galatians, and has penetrated into the meaning of the apostle, sees the great duty of HOLDING THE HEAD, and of resting, for justification by faith, on Jesus Christ alone, inculcated throughout them as the predominant precept of christianity, in opposition to the rudiments of the world, to philosophy and vain deceit, to will worship, to all dependence for our happiness on human works and devices of whatever kind. Such a person sees what true protestantism is, contrasted with genuine popery; and, of course, he is convinced, that the difference is not merely verbal or frivolous, but that there is a perfect opposition in the two plans; and such as admits of no coalition or union; and that therefore the true way of withstanding the devices of Satan, is to be faithful to the great doctrine of justification by the grace of Jesus Christ, through faith alone, and not by our own works or deservings. Hence the very foundation of false religion is overthrown; hence troubled consciences obtain solid peace, and faith, working by love, leads men into the very spirit of christianity, while it comforts their hearts, and establishes them in every good work.

Schemes of religion so extremely opposite, being ardently pursued by both parties, could not fail to produce a violent rupture. The church of Christ and the world were then seen engaged in contest. Innocent first tried the methods of argument and persecution. He sent bishops and monks, who preached in those places, where the Waldensian doctrine flourished. Their success was very inconsiderable. In the neighborhood of Narbonne two monks were employed, Peter de Chateauneuf, and Dominic. The former of these was murdered, probably by Raymond, count of Toulouse, because he had refused to remove the excommunication, which he had denounced against that prince. Though there appears no evidence that Raymond either understood or felt the vital influence of the protestant doctrines, yet he strongly protected his Waldensian subjects. He witnessed the purity of their lives and manners, and heard with indignation the calumnies with which they were aspersed by their adversaries, who proclaimed to all the world their own hypocrisy, avarice and ambition. He was incensed at the wickedness practised on his subjects, and indignant at his own unmerited disgrace; but his conduct in this instance was unjustifiable. The event was disastrous. Innocent obtained what he wished, a decent pretence for his horrible and most iniquitous persecution; and thousands of the sincerely pious were unrighteously calumniated as accessory to crime.

The insidious customs of the inquisition are well known. From the year 1206, when it was first established, to the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless christians was so great, that certain French bishops, in the last mentioned year, desired the monks of the inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment, till the Pope should be advertised of the great numbers apprehended; numbers so great, that it was impossible to defray the charge of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true is it, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church, that in the year 1530 there were in Europe above eight hundred thousand who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

When the Waldenses saw that the design of the pope was to gain the reputation of having used gentle and reasonable methods of persuasion, they agreed among themselves, to undertake the open defence of their principles. They, therefore, gave the bishops to understand, that their pastors, or some of them in the name of the rest, were ready to prove their religion to be truly scriptural, in an open conference, provided it might be conducted with propriety. They explained their ideas of propriety, by desiring that there might be moderators on both sides, who should be vested with full authority to prevent all tumult and violence; that the conference should be held at some place, to which all parties might have free and safe access; and that some one subject should be chosen, with the common consent of the disputants, which should be steadily prosecuted, till it was fully discussed and determined; and that he who could not maintain it by the word of God, the only decisive rule of christians, should own himself confuted.

This was perfectly equitable and judicious, and the bishop could not with decency refuse to accept the terms. The place of discussion agreed on was Montreal, near Carcassone in the year 1206. The umpires on the one side were the bishops of Villeneuse and Auxeere; on the other R. de Bot, and Anthony Riviere.

Several pastors were deputed to manage the debate for the Waldenses, of whom Arnold Hot was the principal. He arrived first at the time and place appointed. A bishop named Eusus, came afterwards on the side of the papacy, accompanied by the monk Dominic, two of the pope's legates, and several other priests and monks. The points undertaken to be proved by Arnold, were, that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous, and unscriptural; that the church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, and that its polity was bad and unholy. Arnold sent those propositions to the bishop, who required fifteen days to answer him, which were granted. At the day appointed, the bishop appeared, bringing with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired to be heard by word of mouth, only entreating their patience, if he took a considerable time in answering so prolix a writing. Fair promises of a patient hearing were made to him. He discoursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience.

At length Arnold desired, that the bishops and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the word of God. What they said on the occasion we are not informed; but the cause of the abrupt conclusion of the conference showed which party had the advantage. While the two legates were disputing with Arnold, the bishop of Villeneuse, the umpire of the papal party, declared, that nothing could be determined because of the coming of the crusaders. What he asserted was too true: the papal armies advanced, and, by fire and faggots, soon decided all controversies.

Arnold and his assistants were, doubtless, of the number of those, who "did truth, and therefore came to the light, that their deeds might be made manifest, that they were wrought in God." And their adversaries were of those who "hated the light, and would not come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved."

The recourse of the popish party to arms, in the room of sober argumentation, was to pour contempt on the word of God, and to confess that its light was intolerably offensive to them. The approach of the crusaders, who, in the manner related, put an end to the conference, was not accidental; for Innocent, who never intended to decide the crontroversy by argument, on occasion of the unhappy murder of the monk before mentioned, had dispatched preachers throughout Europe, to collect all, who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter of Chateauneuf; promising paradise to those, who should bear arms for forty days, and bestowing on them the same indulgences as he did on those, who undertook to conquer the Holy Land. "We moreover promise," says he in his bull, "to all those who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. And since we are not to keep faith with those, who do not keep it with God, we would have all to understand, that every person who is bound to the said earl Raymond by oath of allegiance, or by any other way, is absolved by apostolical authority from such obligations; and it is lawful for any Roman Catholic, to persecute the said earl, and to seize upon his country," &c.

The tyrant proceeds in his bull: "We exhort you, that you would endeavor to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses, and do this with more rigor than you would use towards the Saracens themselves: persecute them with a strong hand: deprive them of their lands, and put Roman Catholics in their room."—Such was the pope's method of punishing a whole people for a single murder committed by Raymond.

The French barons, incited by the motives of avarice which Innocent suggested, undertook the work with vigor. The Waldensian christians then had no other part to act, after having performed the duty of faithful subjects and soldiers, but to suffer with patience the oppressions of Antichrist. Three hundred thousand men, induced by avarice and superstition, filled their country, for several years with carnage and confusion. The scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided, can scarcely be conceived. These were conducted, partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Montfort.

The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labor was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled, and burned 140 persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon, that on the last day when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives, if they would submit to the popedom. But the christians "loved not their lives to the death:" only three women of the company recanted.

Another castle named Termes, not far from Menerbe, in the territory of Narbonne, was taken by Simon in the year 1210. "This place," said Simon, "is of all others the most execrable, because no mass has been sung in it for 30 years." A remark which gives us some idea both of the stability and numbers of the Waldenses: the very worship of popery, it seems, was expelled from that place. The inhabitants made their escape by night, and avoided the merciless hands of Simon.

But the triumphing of the wicked is short: after he had been declared sovereign of Toulouse, which he had conquered, general of the armies of the church, its son and its darling; after he had oppressed and tyrannized over the Waldenses by innumerable confiscations and exactions, he was slain in battle in the year 1218.

Earl Raymond, died of sickness in the year 1222, in a state of peace and prosperity, after his victory over

Simon. No man was ever treated with more injustice by the popedom. But nothing is known of his character for knowledge and piety. His persecutor, Innocent, died in 1216; and the famous Dominic in 1220.

The Waldenses suffered sore and incessant persecutions from the church of Rome, in many different parts of Europe, till the time of the reformation, and, in most instances, they endured them with admirable patience and constancy.

Thus largely did the "King of saints" provide for the instruction of his church, in the darkness of the middle ages. The Waldenses are indeed the middle link which connects the primitive christians and fathers with the reformed; and by their means, the proof is completely established that salvation, by the grace of Christ, felt in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and expressed in the life, has ever existed from the time of the apostles till this day; and that it is a doctrine marked by the cross, and distinct from all that religion of mere form, which calls itself christian, but which wants the spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

The general state of the church in this century.

THOUGH the narrative of the Waldensian transactions does not belong exclusively to the 13th century, it is, however, ascribed to it, because during this, the sect endured most cruel persecutions, and experienced many severe conflicts, which particularly excited the attention of all Europe. At this period a visible church can hardly be said to have had an existence.—There were, however, individuals, who loved the Lord, and served him in the midst of corruption, error and danger.

It was then a time of immense ignorance and wickedness. True, the Aristotelean philosophy greatly prevailed; but it by no means, enlightened men's minds with useful science. Every serious enquirer after truth was embarrassed beyond measure. The most learned doctors, with very few exceptions, were not, in their knowledge, many degrees above the most ignorant and vulgar. The herd of students foolishly employed themselves about the miserable translations of Aristotle, to no purpose. Their ambition was to appear learned in the eyes of the senseless multitude.—The Dominicans and Franciscans were almost the only orders which devoted themselves to study.—These had ample buildings and friendly houses. They attended the deathbeds of the rich and great, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders. These gained much ground, and till the time of the institution of the Jesuits were the pillars of the papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great part of their employment. While the other orders had, by their immoralities reduced themselves to contempt; these two orders, having the semblance of worth, not the substance, revived the authority of the Romish church, supported and strengthened every reigning superstition, and by deep laid plans of hypocrisy, induced numbers to enrich both the papacy and the monastic establishments. These two orders, having obtained a decided ascendency in England, arrogated to themselves great power. The abject slavery and superstition, under which England then sunk, appears, from a commission which Innocent IV. gave to John the Franciscan, in 1247, as follows: "We charge you, that, if the major part of the English prelates should make answer, that they are exempt from foreign jurisdiction, you demand a greater sum, and compel them, by ecclesiastical censures, to withdraw their appeals, any privilege or indulgence notwithstanding."

So shameless were the popes, at this time, in their exactions, and so perfect was their dominion over mankind, that they grossly defrauded even the Franciscans themselves, and were not afraid of the consequences. Men, who received not the testimony of Jesus Christ, and refused submission to his easy yoke, were induced to kiss the iron rod of an Italian tyrant.

The greater part of Europe, had now forsaken the all-important article of justification by the merit of Jesus Christ alone through faith, and were entangled in the nets of pharisaical religion, and readily betook themselves to numberless superstitions, to give quiet and ease to their consciences. The Waldenses found peace and comfort, and the expectation of heaven through Jesus Christ alone by faith, and hence despised the whole popedom with all its appendages; while others, who trembled in conscience for their sins, and knew not the holy wisdom of resting in Christ alone for salvation, might swell with indignation at the wickedness of the court of Rome, but durst not emancipate themselves from its bonds. The power of the Pope was then but a cement of wickedness, which encouraged men with the hopes of heaven, while living in superstition and the indulgence of the greatest crimes.

In 1234, pope Gregory IX. desirous of increasing the credit of the popedom, by a bull directed to all christendom, invited men to assume the cross, and to proceed to the holy land. In this he says, "The service to which they are now invited is an EFFECTUAL ATONEMENT for the miscarriages of a negligent life. The HOLY WAR is a compendious method of discharging men from guilt, and restoring them to the Divine favor. Even if they die on their march, the intention will be taken for the deed, and many may in this way be crowned without fighting."

In this, Gregory, in effect, opposed the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and in contempt of it, taught men to expect justification from God, on the merit of military service, rendered at the command of his Vicegerent. In this way, the human mind was removed from faith in Christ, and men were taught to rely for pardon on the sovereign pontiff, and were led to imbibe the fatal doctrine, that wickedness might be committed, with the flattering prospect of gaining the Divine favor, without a reformation of heart and life.

That the ecclesiastical rulers in those miserable times, did not desire the promotion of piety, but their own secular emolument, is evident from their releasing those who had engaged in the crusade to the holy land, from their vows, on the payment of a fine. It is easily conceived that much wealth would be amassed by this dispensing power. Men were taught to purchase pardon by being liberal in the bestowment of their money on the popish hierarchy, and that this was a sure way to cover their crimes.

During this season of gross darkness, the scripture was neglected; appeals were not made to the word of God, but to Aristotle and the fathers, which were considered as decisive. The few who truly feared and served God, suffered extreme persecution.

Of the Eastern churches scarce any thing worthy of relation occurs, except that they were overrun by a mixed multitude under Othman, who, in the year 1299, was proclaimed Sultan, and founded a new empire. These, under the name of TURKS, succeeded the Saracens both in the propagation of Mahometanism, and in diffusing the horrors of war. A few who had been illuminated by the rays of divine light and love, exemplified the power of religion in their lives: among this number, Lewis IX. of France, held a conspicuous rank. He often invited men of religious character to his table, banished from his court all diversions prejudicial to morals, and lived a life of self-denial. No man, who violated the rules of decorum, could find admission into his presence. He frequently retired for the purpose of secret prayer. Those, who were guilty of blasphemy, were, by his order, marked on the lips, some say on the forehead, with a hot iron. Uprightness and integrity strongly marked his character. The nobles, he suffered not to oppress their vassals. The exercise of sovereign power was, in his hands, a blessing to mankind. In him, wisdom and truth, sound policy and christian sincerity, appeared not at variance, but in sweet concord. Under the complicated disadvantages of his situation, he could only cherish the spirit of a christian himself: the whole tenor of his life demonstrated the sincerity of his faith and love: but, enslaved by papal domination, he could not emancipate his subjects.

True it is, that he engaged in the mad project of the crusades, a project imprudent and chimerical: but in the whole course of his military measures, he avoided the unnecessary effusion of blood by saving the life of every infidel whom he could take prisoner. In all this, Lewis was the same man; the fear of God was his predominant principle of action. He was taken captive by the Saracens and menaced with death: but ceased not from his usual fortitude and concern for his soldiers. At length being ransomed, as he returned to Europe, three sermons were preached every week on board his ship, and the sailors and soldiers were catechised, and instructed, he himself bearing a part in all the religious offices.

On a second crusade, Lewis laid siege to Tunis on the coast of Africa, and died before that city. His advice to Philip his eldest son, which he then gave, was very salutary. "Avoid wars," says he, "with christians, and spare the innocent subjects of your enemy. Discountenance blasphemy, drunkenness, and impurity. Lay no heavy burdens on your subjects. I pray our Lord Jesus Christ to strengthen you in his service, and always to strengthen his grace in you; and I beg that we may together see, praise and honor him to eternity. Suffer patiently; being persuaded that you deserve much more punishment for your sins; and then tribulation will be your gain. Love and converse with the godly: banish the vicious from your company: delight to hear profitable sermons: wherever you are, permit none, in your presence, to deal in slanderous or indecent conversation. Hear the poor with patience, and where your own interest is concerned, stand for your adversary yourself, till the truth appear." In his last hours, Lewis prayed with tears for the conversion of infidels and sinners; and besought God, that his army might have a safe retreat, lest through weakness of the flesh they should deny Christ. He repeated aloud, "Lord, I will enter into thine house; I will worship in thy holy temple, and give glory to thy name. Into thine hands I commend my spirit." These were his last words. He died in 1270, aged 55.

This century was dark indeed; there does not appear to have been in the whole Romish church a single divine, who could give to a serious enquirer a scriptural answer to the question, "what shall I do to be saved?" The light of scripture and of its genuine doctrines, was unknown in christendom. The ignorance of the times was exceedingly great, and the difdifficulty of acquiring divine knowledge beyond our conception.

In the midst of this darkness Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, a man of excellent genius, distinguished himself for his sound morals, and great learning.—His mind was always more clear in discerning the END of true religion than it was in discovering the MEANS of promoting it. Upright, intrepid, disinterested, and constantly influenced by the fear of God, he failed of bringing about the good which he conceived in his heart, because he had too little acquaintance with "the mystery of godliness," and because he too much relied on moral and prudential plans, for that reformation of mankind, which is sought in vain from every thing, except from the knowledge and application of the gospel. He was, for many years, attached to the church of Rome, but all along, opposed to its abuse of power and unjust exactions; towards the close of his life, he became more than ever convinced of its gross abominations and scandals, and though, like most divines of that age, not acquainted with the just nature of the christian article of justification by Jesus Christ the righteous; yet he appears to have trusted in HIM for eternal salvation, and to have known too well his own sinfulness to have put any trust in himself.

CENTURY XIV.

The General State of the Church in this Century.

THE same ignorance and superstition, the same vices and immoralities, which predominated in the last century, abounded in this. Real christians were to be found only among the Waldenses, or in those who worshipped God in obscurity. Various other sects arose, who were cruelly persecuted by popes and emperors; but none, appear to have professed the real doctrines, or were influenced by the real spirit of Jesus. Some of them, both in principles and practice, were the disgrace of human nature. But to detail the narratives of fanaticism, with which most ecclesiastical histories abound, is not the object of this work.—The church of God, considered as a society, seems then to have existed only among the Waldenses.

There were numerous societies in this century, that suffered extremely by the iron hand of power. Among all these, the Waldenses, sometimes called Lollards, by way of reproach, seem perfectly distinguished, by their solid piety, sound scriptural judgment, and practical godliness; and therefore they may justly be accounted to have suffered for righteousness' sake; while the rest, as far as certainty appears, were the martyrs of folly, turbulence, or impiety.

In the East the profession of christianity still existed in that contracted empire of which Constantinople was the metropolis; but nothing appears like the primitive faith and piety.

The maxims and examples of the court of Rome, in this period, were unspeakably detrimental to the cause of godliness. It claimed a right to dispose of all offices in the church, and, in that way, amassed incredible sums. Boniface VIII. then filled the christian world with the noise and turbulence of his ambition. He died in extreme misery, in 1303, in the ninth year of his papacy. For 50 years afterward, the church had two or three heads at the same time: and while each of the contending popes was anathamatizing his competitors, the reverence of mankind for the popedom was diminished, and the labors of those who strove to propagate Divine truth, began to be more seriously regarded by men of conscience and probity.

Eleazar, count of Arian, in Naples, born in 1295, distinguished himself for his piety. At the age of 23, he succeeded to his father's estate; and for five years, which brought him to the close of life, he supported a constant tenor of devotion, and religious seriousness. Some of the regulations of his household were these:

"I cannot allow any blasphemy in my house, nor any thing in word or deed which offends the laws of decorum.

"Let the ladies spend the morning in reading and prayer, the afternoon at some work.

"Dice, and all games of hazard are prohibited.

"Let all persons in my house divert themselves at proper times, but never in a sinful manner.

"Let there be constant peace in my family; otherwise two armies are formed under my roof, and the master is devoured by them both.

"If any difference arise, let not the sun go down upon your wrath.

"We must bear with something, if we have to live among mankind. Such is our frailty, we are scarcely in tune with ourselves a whole day; and if a melancholy humor come on us, we know not well what we would have.

"Not to bear and not to forgive, is diabolical; to love enemies, and to do good for evil, is the mark of the children of God.

"Every evening, all my family shall be assembled at a godly conference, in which they shall hear something of God and salvation. Let none be absent on pretence of attending to my affairs. I have no affairs so interesting to me as the salvation of my domestics.

"I seriously forbid all injustice, which may cloak itself under color of serving me."

"If I feel an impatience under affront," said he on one occasion, "I look at Christ. Can any thing which I suffer, be like to that which he endured for me?"

God has his secret saints in the most gloomy state of the church; and Eleazar seems to have been one of these. In his last sickness, the history of our Savior's passion was daily read to him, and by this means his mind was consoled under the pains with which he was afflicted.

In this century too, Bradwardine, an Englishman, arose, distinguished for his accurate and profound investigation in divinity. Deeply sensible of the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of the preciousness of the grace of Christ, he seems to have overlooked, or little regarded the fashionable superstitions of his time, and to have applied the whole vigor and vehemence of his spirit to the defence of the principles of the gospel. He was a strong and able advocate for the scripture doctrine of free and sovereign grace, in opposition to all self-righteous claims. Conscious of the pernicious tendency of SELF-SUFFICIENCY, he wrote much against Pelagianism, with a heart evidently inflamed with zeal for the Divine glory, and laboring for the spiritual profit of souls.—While writing in defence of free grace, he appears to have been under the steady influence of humility and piety; and after having described the opposition made to Divine grace from age to age, he thus concludes: "I know, O Lord God, that thou dost not despise nor forsake those who love thee; but thou dost sustain, teach, cherish, strengthen, and confirm them. Relying on this, thy goodness and truth, I undertake to war under thy invincible banners."

Bradwardine lived in an age dreary, unpromising and full of darkness: but notwithstanding all this, he appears to have lived by faith on the Son of God.

John Wickliff, an Englishman, the renowned reformer, a man of extensive knowledge, and great strength of mind, flourished about the year 1371. He preached pointedly against the prevailing abuses in religion; particularly the real presence of Christ in the eucharist. On this point he has been considered remarkably clear. In this, his principal design, it appears, was to recover the church from idolatry, especially in regard to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

Sensible that the papal power was founded in usurpation, he insisted that the church of Rome was not the head of other churches, that St. Peter was not superior to the other apostles, and that the pope, in the power of the keys, was only equal to a common priest.

These were undoubtedly the sentiments of genuine protestantism, and excited a spirit of bitter persecution against him.

This reformer translated the bible from the Latin into the English tongue: the value of which work, at so dark a time, was great. At this, the Romish hierarchy were enraged, which evinced that they hated the light, and would not come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved.

Concerning Wickliff it may with propriety be said, that a political spirit too deeply infected his conduct; but that special benefit accrued, from his labors, to the church of Christ, both in England and upon the continent. He died in peace at Lutterworth, in the year 1387.

In the year 1410, his works, about 200 volumes, were burned at Oxford, by order of Subinco, archbishop of Prague; and in 1428, his remains were dug out of his grave and burned, and his ashes thrown into the river at Lutterworth.

Wickliff had many errors, and many virtues; but he gave evidence of true piety. An effusion of the Divine Spirit accompanied his labors, which were abundant, and its effects appear to have been lasting. He was a formidable adversary of the papal superstitions, and a spirited and able advocate for the RIGHT of the common people to read the scriptures.—He was earnest, every where in his writings, to establish the grand protestant sentiment, of the sufficiency of the scriptures for saving instruction. The reason, of his having done this, was; Friars persecuted the faithful, and said "it had never been well with the church since lords and ladies regarded the gospel, and relinquished the manners of their ancestors."

Wickliff labored abundantly to persuade men to trust wholly to Christ, and rely altogether upon his sufferings, and not to seek to be justified in any other way.

CENTURY XV.

CHAPTER I.

The Lollards.

TERMS of reproach have, in all ages, been applied to real christians. Lollard, the name given to the followers of Wickliff, is to be considered as one of them.

Arundel, archbishop of York, in this century used his utmost to induce king Richard II. to harass all persons, who should dare, in their native language, to read and study the gospels of Jesus Christ.

In the year 1399, Richard was deposed by Henry of Lancaster. He was shortly afterward crowned by Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury under the title of Henry IV. A persecution then commenced, more terrible than any which had ever been known under the English kings. William Sawtre, a clergyman in London, who openly taught the doctrine of Wickliff, was the first man who was burnt in England for opposing the abominations of popery. In the year 1400, he suffered the flames of martyrdom, glorying in the cross of Christ, and strengthened by divine grace.

John Badby, an illiterate workman, was about this time persecuted to death, for affirming that the consecrated bread remaineth, after its consecration the same material bread, which it was before, a sign, or sacrament of the living God. "I believe," said he, "the omnipotent God in Trinity to be ONE. But if every consecrated host be the Lord's body, then there are twenty thousand gods in England." After he had been delivered, by the bishops, to the secular power, he was, by the king's writ, condemned to be burned. The prince of Wales, being present, earnestly exhorted him to recant, menacing the most terrible vengeance if he should remain obstinate. Badby was inflexible. As soon as he felt the fire, he cried, Mercy!

The prince, supposing that he was entreating the mercy of his judges, ordered the fire to be quenched.—"Will you forsake heresy," said young Henry; "and will you conform to the faith of the holy church? If you will you shall have a yearly stipend out of the king's treasury." The martyr was unmoved; Henry in a rage declared, that he might now look for no favor. Badby gloriously finished his course.

The conflict had now grown serious, and Henry published a severe statute, by which grievous pains and penalties were to be inflicted, on all, who should dare to defend or encourage the tenets of Wickliff; and this, in conjunction with a constituion of Arundel, too tedious to be recited, seemed to threaten the total extinction of this falsely named heresy. The persecutors were very active, and many persons through fear recanted; but worthies were still found, who continued faithful unto death.

In the year 1413, Henry IV. died, and was succeeded by Henry V. who trode in his steps, and countenanced Arundel, in his plan of extirpating the Lollards, and of supporting the existing hierarchy by penal coercions. In the first year of the new king's reign, this archbishop collected in St. Paul's church in London, a synod of all the bishops and clergy of England. The principal object of the assembly was to repress the growing sect; and, as Sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, had on all occasions discovered a partiality for these reformers, the resentment of the archbishop and of the whole body of the clergy, was particularly levelled at this nobleman. Lord Cobham was most obnoxious to the ecclesiastics. For he had openly and distinguishingly opposed the abuses of popery. At a great expense, he had collected, transcribed, and dispersed the works of Wickliff among the common people without reserve; and it was well known that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers, in many parts of the country.

But Lord Cobham was a favorite both of the king and of the people; and therefore to effect his destruction was an undertaking which required much caution.

The archbishop was in earnest, and he concerted his measures with prudence.

His first step was to procure the royal mandate for sending twelve commissioners to Oxford, to examine and report the progress of heresy. They found Oxford overrun with heretics. The opinions of Wickliff had made their way among the junior students; and the talents and integrity of their master were held in high esteem and admiration by his disciples.—Arundel laid this information before the grand convention, who determined, that, without delay, Lord Cobham should be prosecuted as a heretic. With great solemnity, a copy of each of Wickliff's works was publicly burnt, by the enraged archbishop, in the presence of the nobility, clergy, and people; and one of Lord Cobham's books was of the number burnt. This circumstance confirmed the assembly in their belief that that nobleman was a great encourager of the Lollards.

At the moment when the convocation were vowing vengeance against Lord Cobham, some of the more cool and discreet members, are said to have suggested the propriety of sounding how the young king would relish the measures they had in view, before they should proceed any futher. Arundel instantly perceived the wisdom of this advice, and resolved to follow it.

To give weight to his proceedings, this artful primate, at the head of a great number of dignified ecclesiastics, complained most grievously to Henry, of the heretical practices of his favorite servant Lord Cobham, and entreated his majesty to consent to the prosecution of so incorrigible an offender.

Through the management of Arundel the king's mind was previously impressed with strong suspicions of Lord Cobham's heresy and enmity to the church. That very book, above mentioned, of this excellent man, which the convocation had condemned to the flames, was read aloud before the king, the bishop, and the temporal peers of the realm; at the recital of which, Henry was exceedingly shocked and declared, that, in his life, he never heard such horrid heresy.—

However, in consideration of the high birth, military rank, and good services of Sir John Oldcastle, the king enjoined the convocation to deal favorably with him, and to desist from all further process for some days: he wished to restore him to the unity of the church without rigor or disgrace, and promised, that he himself in the mean time, would send privately to the honorable knight, and endeavor to persuade him to renounce his errors.

The king kept his promise, and is said to have used every argument he could think of, to convince him of the high offence of separating from the church; and at last, to have pathetically exhorted him to retract and submit, as an obedient child to his holy mother. The answer of the knight is very expressive of the frank and open intrepidity which distinguished his character. "You I am always ready to obey," said he, "because you are the appointed minister of God, and bear the sword for the punishment of evil doers. But as to the pope and his spiritual dominion, I owe them no obedience, nor will I pay them any; for as sure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that the pope of Rome is the great Antichrist, foretold in holy writ, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination, standing in the holy place." The extreme ignorance of Henry in matters of religion, disposed him by no means to relish such an answer as this: he immediately turned away from him in visible displeasure, and gave the disciple of Wickliff to the malice of his enemies.

Arundel, supported by the sovereign power, sent a citation to the castle of Cowling, where lord Cobham then resided. But feudal ideas were, at that time, no less fashionable than those of ecclesiastical domination. The high spirited nobleman availed himself of his privileges, and refused admission to the messenger. The archbishop then cited him, by letters affixed to the great gates of the cathedral of Rochester; but lord Cobham still disregarded the mandate. Arundel, in a rage, excommunicated him for contumacy, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him.

Cobham, alarmed at the approaching storm, wrote a confession of his faith, delivered it to the king, and entreated his majesty to judge for himself, whether he had merited all this rough treatment. This confession the king coldly ordered to be delivered to the archbishop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring a hundred knights, who would bear testimony to the innocence of his life and opinions. When these expedients had failed, he assumed a higher strain, and begged that he might be permitted, as was usual in less matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. He said he was ready "in the quarrel of his faith, to fight for life or death, with any man living, the king and the lords of his council being excepted." In the issue, Cobham was arrested by the king's express order, and lodged in the tower of London.

On the day appointed, Arundel, the archbishop, with the bishops of London and Winchester, constituted the court. Sir Robert Morley brought lord Cobham before them, and he was arraigned for trial.—"Sir," said the primate, "you stand here, both detected of heresies, and also excommunicated for contumacy. Notwithstanding we have, as yet, neither shown ourselves unwilling to give you absolution, nor yet do, to this hour, provided you would meekly ask for it."

Lord Cobham took no notice of this offer, but desired permission to read an account of his faith, which had long been settled, and to which he intended to stand. He then took out of his bosom a writing respecting the articles whereof he was accused, and when he had read it, delivered the same to the archbishop.

The contents of the paper were, in substance, these:

1. That the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is Christ's body, in the form of bread.

2. That every man that would be saved, must forsake sin, and do penance for sins already committed, with true and sincere contrition.

3. That images might be allowable to represent and give men lively ideas of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the martyrdom and good lives of saints;

but, that if any man gave that worship to dead images, which was due only to God, or put such hope or trust in them as he should do in God, he became a grievous idolater.

4. That the matter of pilgrimages might be settled in few words. A man may spend all his days in pilgrimages, and loose his soul at last: but he that knows the holy commandments of God, and keepeth them to the end, shall be saved, though he never visited the shrines of saints, as men now do, in their pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, and other places.

The archbishop, intent on the destruction of the prisoner, informed him that there were many good things in his paper, but that on several other articles of belief, he had not been sufficiently explicit, and that upon these also his opinion would be expected. As a directory to his faith, he promised to send him in writing, the clear determinations of the church, and warned him very particularly to attend to this point; whether, in the sacrament of the altar, the material bread, did, or did not remain, after the words of consecration.

The determination of the primate and clergy, which, according to promise, was sent to lord Cobham in the tower, here follows:

1. The faith and determination of the holy church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken by a priest in his mass, "the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood." And so there remaineth, thenceforth, neither material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken.

2. Every christian man, living here bodily on earth, ought to confess to a priest ordained by the church, if he can come to him.

3. Christ ordained St. Peter to be his vicar here on earth, whose see is the holy church of Rome: and he granted that the same power which he gave to Peter, should succeed to all Peter's successors; whom we now call popes of Rome . . . . and whom chris-

tian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome.

4. Lastly, the holy church had determined, that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places; and there to worship holy relics, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, approved by the church of Rome.

On Monday, the day appointed for the next examination, Arundel accosted lord Cobham, with an appearance of great mildness, and put him in mind that on the preceding Saturday, he had informed him, he was "accursed for contumacy and disobedience to the holy church;" and had expected he would at that time have meekly requested absolution. The archbishop then declared, that even now it was not too late to make the same request, provided it was done in due form, as the church had ordained.

Lord Cobham, with the humility of a christian, and the firmness of a soldier, replied; "I never yet trespassed against YOU, and therefore I do not feel the want of YOUR absolution." Then kneeling down on the pavement, and lifting up his hands to heaven, he said, "I confess myself here unto thee, my eternal, living GOD, that I have been a grievous sinner. How often in my frail youth, have I offended thee, by ungoverned passions, pride, concupiscence, intemperance! How often have I been drawn into horrible sin by anger, and how many of my fellow men have I injured from this cause! Good Lord, I humbly ask of thee mercy: here I need absolution."

Then rising with tears in his eyes, he cried with a loud voice, "Lo! these are your guides, good people. Take notice; for the violation of God's holy law and his great commandments, they never cursed me; but, for their own arbitrary appointments and traditions, they most cruelly treat me and other men. Let them however, remember, that Christ's denunciations against the Pharisees, shall all be fulfilled."

The dignity of lord Cobham's manner, and the vehemence of his expression, threw the court into some confusion.

After the primate had recovered himself, he proceeded to examine the prisoner respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Do you believe, that after the words of consecration, there remains any MATERIAL bread?" "The scriptures," said Cobham, "make no mention of MATERIAL bread; I believe that Christ's body remains in the FORM of bread. In the sacrament there is both Christ's body and the bread: the bread is the thing we see with our eyes; but the body of Christ is hid, and only to be seen by faith." Upon which, with one voice, they cried Heresy! Heresy!—One of the bishops in particular said vehemently, "That it was a foul heresy to call it bread." Cobham answered smartly, "St. Paul, the apostle, was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a christian:—and yet he calls it BREAD. "The bread," saith he, "that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" To be short with you, I believe the scriptures most cordially, but I have no belief in your lordly laws and idle determinations: ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your deeds do plainly show." Doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, and Wickliff's greatest enemy, now lost all patience, and exclaimed, "What rash and desperate people are these followers of Wickliff."

"Before God and man," replied Cobham, "I solemnly here profess, that till I knew Wickliff, whose judgment ye so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin; but after I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it hath been otherwise with me; so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions."

"It were hard," said Walden, "that in an age of so many learned instructors, you should have had no grace to amend your life, till you heard the devil preach."

"Your fathers," said Cobham, "the old Pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines of the devil. Go on, and like them ascribe every good thing to the devil. Go on, and pronounce every man a heretic, who rebukes your vicious lives. Pray, what warrant have you from scripture, for this very, act you are now about? Where is it written in all God's law that you may thus sit in judgment upon the life of man? Hold! perhaps you will quote Annas and Caiaphas who sat upon Christ and his apostles."

"Yes, sir," said one of the doctors of law, "and Christ too, for he judged JUDAS."

"I never heard that he did," said lord Cobham.—"Judas judged himself, and thereupon went out and hanged himself. Indeed Christ pronounced a wo against him, for his covetousness, as he does still against you, who follow Judas' steps."

At the conclusion of this long and iniquitous trial, the behavior of lord Cobham was perfectly consistent with the temper he had exhibited during its progress. There remained the same undaunted courage and resolution, and the same serenity and resignation.—Some of the last questions which were put to lord Cobham, respected the worship of the CROSS; and his answers prove that neither the acuteness of his genius was blunted, nor the solidity of his judgment impaired.

One of the Friars asked him, whether he was ready to worship the cross upon which Christ died?

"Where is it?" said lord Cobham.

"But suppose it was here at this moment?" said the Friar.

"A wise man indeed," said Cobham, "to put me such a question; and yet he himself does not know where the thing is! But, tell me, I pray, what sort of worship do I owe to it?

One of the conclave answered; "such worship as St. Paul speaks of when he says, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ."

"Right," replied Cobham, and stretched out his arms, "THAT is the true and the very cross; far better than your cross of wood."

"Sir," said the bishop of London, "you know very well that Christ died upon a MATERIAL cross."

"True," said Cobham; "and I know also that our salvation did not come by that material cross; but by him who died thereupon. Further, I know well that St. Paul rejoiced in no other cross, but in Christ's passion and death ONLY, and in his own sufferings and persecution, for the same truth which Christ had died for before."

By the quickness and pertinence of lord Cobham's answers, and by his spirit and resolution, the court was amazed, and for that day, brought to a stand. Arundel, with a great show of lenity and kindness, with mournful looks, entreated the prisoner to return into the bosom of the church, and all this with the most consummate hypocrisy. For he, without further delay, judged, and pronounced Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, to be an incorrigible, pernicious and detestable heretic; and having condemned him as such, delivered him to the secular jurisdiction.

Lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, said, "Though ye condemn my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am well assured, ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than could satan to the soul of Job. He that created it, will, of his infinite mercy, save it. Of this I have no manner of doubt. And in regard to the articles of my belief, I will stand to them, even to my very death, BY THE GRACE OF THE ETERNAL GOD." He then turned to the people, and stretching out his hands, cried with a very loud voice, "Good christian people! for God's love, be well aware of these men; else, they will beguile you, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." Having said these words, he fell down upon his knees, and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, prayed for his enemies in the following words, "Lord God Eternal! I beseech thee, of thy great mercy, to forgive my persecutors, if it be thy blessed will!"

He was then sent back to the tower under the care of Sir Robert Morley. In the mean time, Arundel, finding that the persecution of this virtuous man, was very unpopular, went in person to the king and requested his majesty to postpone, for the space of 50 days, the punishment of lord Cobham. This profound hypocrite, thus temporized, to find the opportunity of a few weeks for lessening the credit of this pious lord, among the people, by a variety of scandalous aspersions.

Lord Cobham, having remained some time in the tower, at length, by unknown means, made his escape, and by the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he concealed himself more than four years. But through the diligence of lord Powis and his dependants, he was at length discovered, taken and brought to London.

His fate was soon determined. He was dragged into St. Giles' fields, with all the insult and barbarity of enraged superstition; and there, both as a traitor and a heretic, suspended alive in chains, upon a gallows, and burnt to death.

Lord Cobham died, as he had lived, in the faith and hope of the gospel, and to the end of his life bearing a noble testimony to its genuine doctrines. He is allowed to have been a man of great learning, and to have had a profound knowledge of the scriptures. At the place of execution, with the utmost bravery and most triumphant joy, he exhorted the people to follow the instructions which God had given them in the scriptures; and to disclaim those false teachers, whose lives and conversation were so contrary to Christ and his religion.

This noble martyr believed and trusted in Him, who hath graciously said, "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and he has undoubtedly gone to receive a crown of glory.

Henry Chicheley, then archbishop of Canterbury, continued at the head of that see from 1414 to 1443, and partly by forced abjurations, and partly by the flames, domineered over the Lollards, and almost effaced the vestiges of godliness in the kingdom. This was one of the most gloomy seasons, which the church ever experienced. The doctrines of Wickliff had indeed been embraced in Bohemia; but the fires of persecution were also kindled in that country; at the same time, no quarter was given to any professor of the pure religion of Christ in England. The strictest search was made after Lollards and their books; and while a few souls, dispersed through various parts, sighed in secret, and detesting the prevailing idolatry, worshipped God in spirit and in truth, they found no HUMAN consolation or support whatever. In Kent, whole families were obliged to relinquish their places of abode for the sake of the gospel.

About this time, William Taylor, a priest, was burnt, for asserting that every prayer, for some supernatural gift, must be directed only to God. All, who diligently and devoutly read the scriptures, and denied popish superstitions, were persecuted as heretics.

But the burning of heretics was found not to be the way to extinguish heresy. On the contrary, both in England and on the continent, such detestable cruelty increased the compassion of the people for their sufferers, excited their indignation against the persecutors, and roused a spirit of enquiry and opposition to the existing hierarchy, which at length, under the direction of a kind, overruling Providence, proved fatal both to papal corruptions and usurped dominion.

In the times of Wickliff, and his followers, the prevailing religion had so little influence on morals and the heart, that a popish writer gives the following distinguishing marks of what he accounts heresy: "The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment; avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labor, and utterly despise wealth: being fully content with bare necessaries. They are chaste and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused by the trifling gaieties of life. Yet you find them always employed; either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers; blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching, lay the chief stress on charity." Persons of the papal hierarchy, who stigmatized such sentiments as heretical however, gloried in calling the abominable community with which they themselevs associated, the HOLY CHURCH.

Who, will deny that the human "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked!"

CHAPTER II.

The Council of Constance, including the Case of John Huss, and Jerom of Prague.

THIS celebrated council made no essential reformation in religion, but persecuted men who truly feared God, and tolerated all the predominant corruptions. Their labors therefore do not deserve to be recorded, on account of the piety and virtue of those who composed this council. The transactions of Constance do however, throw light on the state of religion at that time. They illustrate the character of John Huss and of Jerom of Prague, and afford various instructive reflections to those, who love to attend to the dispensations of Divine Providence, and would understand the comparative power of nature and of grace, of mere human resources, and of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

This council met in 1414. The christian world had been distracted nearly 40 years, by a schism in the popedom. The object of this council was to settle the dispute, and restore peace to the church. Three pretenders to the chair of St. Peter, severally, claimed infallibility. The very nature of their struggle was subversive of the authority to which each of them made pretensions; and of their vain contest there seemed to be no end. The princes, statesmen, and rulers, of the church, in those times, wanted not discernment to see the danger, to which the whole ecclesiastical system was exposed by these contentions; but it seems never to have come into the minds of them, or of any of the members of the council, to examine the foundation on which the popedom itself was erected. That on all sides, was looked on as sacred and inviolable, though allowed to be burdened and incumbered with innumerable abuses.

This council deposed the three existing popes, and chose a new successor of St. Peter, Martin V.; and while they had their eye only on the restoration of the unity of the Roman see, they decreed the superiority of councils over popes; and thus gave a deep wound to the tyrannical hierarchy, which proved of considerable advantage to those real reformers, who arose about a hundred years after the council of Constance.

That there needed a reformation of the church, in all its component parts, and that church discipline ought to be re-established, were, indeed, ideas which lay within their knowledge; and the members of this council universally confessed, that reformation and discipline ought to be prosecuted with vigor. But they brought not to the council the materials, which alone could qualify them for such a work. In general, they knew of nothing higher than the voice of natural conscience, the dictates of common sense, and something concerning the preceptive part of christianity. Their system of religion was letter, not spirit; law, not gospel. To promote the recovery of depraved mankind, they knew no methods but those of moral suasion, on principles merely natural. The original depravity of man, salvation through the atonement of an infinite Redeemer, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were doctrines, the use and efficacy of which they did not understand. These, however, are the only effectual instruments for the reformation of a corrupted church, or individual.

The members of this celebrated council undertook to make "bricks without straw;" and their projects of reform served only, in the event, to teach posterity, that the real doctrines of the gospel, ought to be distinctly known, cordially relished, and powerfully experienced, by those who would undertake to enlighten mankind.

In this council, Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Denmark, and Sweden, were represented. Twenty archbishops, nearly 150 bishops, about 150 other dignitaries, and more than 200 doctors, attended this council: yet they had not sufficient spirit and integrity to punish crimes of the most atrocious nature. Indeed, it was not to be expected that they should enact and execute laws, which bore hard on their own pride, their sloth, and their love of gain: consequently, after all they did, the substantial evils which existed in the church still remained. They could burn, without mercy, those whom they deemed heretics, though men of real godliness, more readily, than lay the axe of wholesome discipline at the root of their own vices.

At the opening of the council of Constance, pope, John XXIII. and the emperor Sigismund, were at the head of it, who continually endeavored to bafflle the views of each other. John was by far the most powerful of the three popes, who, at that time, struggled for the chair of St. Peter; and Sigismund, while he pretended to acknowledge his authority, had secretly resolved to oblige him to renounce the pontificate.—Sigismund was remarkable for hypocrisy and dissimulation. By both these potentates, and by many others connected with the council, political artifices were multiplied. These were the men who undertook to punish heretics and reform the church.

Pope John had already, in a council at Rome, condemned the opinions of John Huss, and was then determined to signalize his zeal for what was then called the church, by confirming the same condemnation at Constance.

Huss had been summoned to the council to answer for himself, though already excommunicated at Rome. He obtained, however, a writing from the emperor, engaging that he should be allowed to pass without molestation. The emperor, in conjunction with his brother Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, had committed him to the care of several Bohemian lords, particularly of John de Chlum. This escort travelled with him to Constance, where they arrived six days after the pope.

John Huss was born in Bohemia in 1373, of mean parentage; but by his superior genius, industry, eloquence, probity and decency of manners, was raised to great eminence. He was appointed rector of the of the university of Prague, which was then in a very flourishing state. In the year 1400, he was nominated preacher of Bethlehem, and in the same year was made confessor to Sophia, the wife of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, a princess of great merit, who highly esteemed him.

In 1405, Huss preached in the chapel of Bethlehem with great celebrity. At first he is said to have held the writings of Wickliff in detestation. But it is not in the power of prejudice to prevent the progress of the Divine councils, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Huss was gradually convinced of the power and excellency of evangelical truth. His doctrinal knowledge was, however, very limited and defective; but the little fundamental light which, through grace, he attained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached loudly against the abuses of the Romish church; and particularly the imposture of false miracles, which then abounded. He also preached in a synod at Prague, in the archbishop's presence, with great freedom against the vices of the clergy. Gregory XII. one of the three popes, whose schism gave rise to the council of Constance, was received in Bohemia. But when measures were proposed for calling a general council to compose the schism, Huss engaged the university to support those measures, and exhorted all Bohemia to the same purpose. The archbishop of Prague, who was attached to Gregory, opposed Huss, called him a schismatic, and forbade him to exercise the pastoral functions in his diocese. About the same time, on occasion of a dispute between the natives and foreigners, who belonged to the university, Huss, having supported the former, and gained his point, the Germans, in disgust, retired from Prague. This circumstance enabled the Bohemian teacher to speak more publicly according to the views of Wickliff. The archbishop of Prague committed the books of the latter to the flames in 1410. But the progress of his opinions was rather accelerated than retarded by this step.

The troubles of Huss were multiplied, and he was excommunicated at Rome. He had sent his proctors thither to answer for him; but they were committed to prison, after they had remained there to no purpose a year and an half. Huss, after his excommunication, had no other remedy but to appeal to Almighty God in very solemn terms. In his appeal, which was charged on him as a crime, among many other things, he says, "Almighty God, the one only essence in Three Persons, is the first and last refuge of those who are oppressed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very man, being desirous to redeem, from eternal damnation, his children elected before the foundation of the world, has given, by suffering a bloody and ignominious death, this excellent example to his disciples, to commit their cause to the judgment of God." He still continued to preach on subjects, which he deemed seasonable and useful. In one sermon, he treated of the uses of the commemoration of the saints, among which he reckons meditation on the misery of man, subject to death for sin; and on the death which Jesus Christ suffered for our sin. In this same sermon, while he zealously opposed the abuses of the times, he discovered that he himself was not then entirely clear of the popish notion of purgatory. "In praying devoutly for the dead," said he, "we procure relief to the saints in purgatory." He admitted, however, "that there is no mention of such a practice in the holy scriptures; and, that neither the prophets, nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, nor the saints that followed close after, taught prayer for the dead." "I verily believe," continued Huss, "this custom was introduced by the avarice of priests, who don't trouble themselves to exhort the people to live well, as did the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles; but take great care to exhort them to make rich offerings in hopes of happiness and a speedy delivery from purgatory.

At length John Huss was forbidden to preach any more at Prague. All that he could then do was to instruct his countrymen by his writings. Having been summoned, as we have seen, to Constance, he obeyed; and before his departure, offered to give an account of his faith in the presence of a provincial synod at Prague, but was not able to obtain an audience. In this and some other particulars he appears to have acted with great frankness and integrity; and though his mind strongly foreboded that which happened in the issue, his resolution to appear at the general council was constant and unmoved.

On the day succeeding his arrival at Constance, Huss gave notice of it to the pope, through his friend John de Chlum, who, at the same time, implored for him the protection of his holiness. Pope John was then in much fear on his own account, and it behoved him not, in his present circumstances, to exercise the fulness of papal domination. He, therefore, answered courteously; declared that he would use all his power to prevent any injustice to be done to him while at Constance, and took off his excommunication.

Huss appears to have expected that he should have had permission to preach before the council; for he had prepared sermons for that purpose, which are inserted among his works.

In the first of these he declared his reliance on the word of God as the only true and sufficient rule of salvation. Also he declared his veneration for fathers and councils, so far as they are conformable to scripture. He added, "every man must be a disciple either of God or of Satan. Faith is the rudiment of one of these schools, infidelity of the other. A man must believe in God alone, not in the virgin, not in the saints, not in the church, not in the pope: for none of these are God." "The church" he said, "is an assembly of all the predestinated, and consists "of the triumphant church in heaven, the militant church on earth, and the sleeping church:" pitiable blindness! "who are now suffering in purgatory." He allowed the intercession of the virgin Mary and of other saints; and, in favor of this popish tenet, spoke far more forcibly, than might have been expected from one, who had so unlimited a veneration for the holy scriptures.

Huss may be said to have been a martyr for holy practice itself. He does not seem to have held any one doctrine, which at that day was called heretical.

The world hated him, because he was not of the world, and because he testified of it, that its works were evil. He appears to have had that faith which works by love, purifying the heart. With those who persecuted him, even to the flames of martyrdom, the term "vicious believer," appears not to have been a solecism in language. He appears to have received an UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE, which preserved his holy affection alive, amidst the contagion of superstition, the temptations of the world, and the menaces of insolent and tyrannical domination.

Those, who look only at the external forms of religion, might be tempted to think, that the council of Constance, was in general influenced by the Spirit of God. In all their public sessions they sang an anthem, and then prayed kneeling. After having remained some time in this posture, a deacon called out to them to rise; and the president addressed himself to the Holy Ghost in a loud voice in a collect, which, in very solemn and explicit terms, supplicated his effectual influence, that, not withstanding the enormity of their sins, which filled them with dread, HE would deign to descend into their hearts, to direct them, to dictate their decrees, and to execute them himself, and also to preserve their minds from corrupt passions, and not suffer them through ignorance or selfishness, to swerve from justice and truth. The ideas, and perhaps the very words were, however, taken from better times, when the operations of the Holy Ghost were not only professed, but FELT in christian assemblies. The forms of true religion often remain a long time after the spirit of it has been almost extinguished. Both the emperor Sigismund and his consort Barba, who were infamous for lewdness, attended the religious ceremonies of this council. Sigismund, in a deacon's habit, read the gospel, while the pope celebrated mass!

Huss was soon deprived of his liberty, in the following manner. He was accused by Paletz, professor of divinity at Prague, and by Causis, a pastor of one of the parishes of the same city. These men caused bills to be posted up against him in Constance, as an excommunicated heretic. When Huss complained, the pope replied, "What can I do in this case? Your own countrymen have done it." The bishops of Augsburgh and of Trent were directed to summon him to appear before John XXIII. "I had expected," said Huss, "to give an account of myself before the general council, and not before the pope and his cardinals; however I am willing to lay down my life, rather than betray the truth." He set out therefore without delay, accompanied by his generous friend John de Chlum. On his arrival at the pope's palace, he was committed to prison. Chlum made loud complaints to the pope, but in vain. Eight articles were exhibited against Huss by Causis, and the pope appointed commissioners to try him. The vexations and insults, to which Huss was exposed, were numerous and cruel: and he was unjustly accused of being more unfriendly to the church of Rome, than he really was. Whatever Wickliff maintained, Huss was accused of maintaining; nor were his own express declarations respected, particularly in regard to transubstantiation, a doctrine which he certainly believed, and on which he wrote his thoughts while under confinement at Constance. With great clearness he vindicated himself against the charge of heresy; but, his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies. Moreover, all those whom the faithfulness of his pastoral services in Bohemia had provoked, then found an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him.

The generous count de Chlum, grieved and incensed at the imprisonment of Huss, wrote to Sigismund on this subject. That prince immediately sent express orders to his ambassadors to cause him to be set at liberty, and even to break the gates of the prison in case of resistance. The unfortunate Huss was not, however, released; and he soon found that the arts and intrigues, both of the pope and of the emperor, were so deceptive, that to commit himself to HIM that judgeth righteously, was his only expedient. In the mean time, the doctors, in their preaching, exclaimed most pathetically against the prevailing evils and abuses, and exhorted the council to reform the church with vigor. Its growing corruptions and enormities were, by them, exposed in the strongest colors. Wickliff himself, or Huss, could scarcely have spoken in a more pointed or severe manner. They were not, however, permitted to censure with impunity even the most shameful practices. They preached by order of their superiors, and took particular care, in the midst of their keenest animadversions, to express an unequivocal respect to the popedom in general.

Though Sigismund's authority extended over the empire, and he, by virtue of that authority, *required all his subjects to suffer Huss to pass and repass secure; and for the honor of his imperial Majesty, if need be, to provide him with good passports*, yet the commissioners, for the examination of Huss, persuaded the emperor that he ought not to keep faith with a man accused of heresy, and that, to acquiesce in the desires of the venerable council, was the line of conduct proper for him to pursue, as an obedient and good son of the church; Huss, therefore, was *not allowed* to repass, but was detained in prison at Constance.

Before the death of their countryman, the Bohemian nobility, enraged at the perfidy of Sigismund, repeatedly remonstrated, by letters, against his proceedings, but all to no purpose. At the solicitation of Paletz, Huss was confined in the Dominican convent, where he became dangerously sick, through the bad air and other inconveniences of a noisome dungeon.

That same John who had most unrighteously persecuted Huss, found himself so disagreeably situated at Constance, by reason of the accusations of his enemies, and the intrigues and maneuvers of Sigismund, and the majority of the council, that he determined to depart, in secret from the assembly. He fled to Schaffhausen, a city belonging to Frederic duke of Austria, who had promised to defend him. But the emperor, Sigismund, determined on supporting the authority of the council, took such measures as obliged Frederic to surrender at discretion, and to abandon the cause of John. Thus that pontiff, who, at first had presided at the council, after having fled from place to place, was at length confined at Gottleben, in the same prison where Huss, the victim of his cruelty, was confined.

The three rival popes were at length deposed, and declared by the council incapable of being re-elected. Huss, in the mean time, contrary to every principle of justice, honor and humanity, was still kept in confinement, and in vain solicited a fair hearing of his cause.

At this council another striking example of the same spirit of persecution was exhibited, and that towards Jerom of Prague, a firm friend and adherent of John Huss. Jerom was a master of arts, and a man of very superior talents. Though his character was neither clerical nor monastic, yet he spared no pains to second all the endeavors of Huss to promote a reformation in Bohemia. He even travelled into England to procure knowledge, and brought the books of Wickliff into his own country. When Huss was setting out from Prague, Jerom had exhorted him to maintain with steadfastness the doctrines which he had preached, and had promised that he himself would go to Constance to support him, if he should hear that he was oppressed.

Jerom was true to his promise. Huss, in one of his letters to a friend, had desired Jerom not to come, lest he should meet with the same treatment which he himself had experienced; but he did not desist from his purpose, and came directly to Constance. Having learned that Huss was not allowed a fair examination, and that some secret machination was formed against himself, he retired to Uberlingen, whence he wrote to the emperor to request a safe conduct. Sigismund refused to grant his petition. Upon which Jerom published a paper, declaring it to be his desire to answer any charges of heresy that could possibly be brought against him. This produced no satisfactory answer; and finding he could not be of any service to his friend Huss, he resolved to return to his own country. After his departure, he was summoned to appear before the council, and a *safe conduct or pass-*

port, was given him. This, however, contained such *a salvo to justice*, and the *interests of the faith*, as rendered it, in effect a mere nullity.

To omit a long detail of uninteresting particulars, this persecuted reformer was arrested at Hirsaw, on his return to Bohemia, and was led in chains to Constance. There he was immediately brought before a general congregation, which seemed intent on insulting, ensnaring, and browbeating their virtuous prisoner.

"You vented several errors in our university," said a doctor from Cologne. "Be pleased to name one," answered Jerom. The accuser plead that his memory failed him. "You advanced most impious heresies among us," said a divine from Heidleburg: "I remember one, particularly concerning the Trinity.—You declared that it resembled water, snow, and ice." Jerom avowed that he still persisted in his opinions, but was ready to retract, with humility, and with pleasure, when he should be convinced of an error.—No opportunity was, however, allowed him either for explanation or defence: all was confusion and uproar: voices burst from every quarter, "Away with him, away with him; to the fire; to the fire."

Jerom stood astonished at the gross indecency of this scene, and as soon as he could in any degree be heard, looked round the assembly with a steady and significant countenance, and cried aloud, "Since nothing but my blood will satisfy you, I am resigned to the will of God." The archbishop of Saltzbourg replied, "No Jerom—God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live."

After this tumultuous examination, Jerom was delivered to the officers of the city, and immediately carried to a dungeon. Some hours afterward, Wallenrod, archbishop of Riga, caused him to be conveyed privately to St. Paul's church, where he was bound to a post, and his hands were chained to his neck.—In this posture Jerom remained ten days, and was fed only with bread and water. During this time his friends knew not what had become of him; till at length one of them received notice of his pitiable situation, from the keeper of the prison and procured him better nourishment. The hardships which he underwent brought upon him a dangerous illness, in the course of which he pressed the council to allow him a confessor. With difficulty he at length obtained his request, and through his means procured some small mitigation of his sufferings; but he remained in prison till the day of his death.

Some who composed the council of Constance, were learned and able; many, superstitious and bigotted; and most of them, worldly minded and unprincipled, totally ignorant of evangelical truth. And as the works of the famous Wickliff, which had laid the foundation of the religious innovationss in Bohemia, reprobated the general course of their wicked practices, they proceeded to condemn the doctrines of that obnoxious reformer. This they did, as far as appears, without one dissenting voice, and pronounced the author of them a heretic. They even proceeded so far as to declare "that there is no salvation out of the church of Rome." This they affirmed on the supposed validity of a decretal of pope Callixtus, which declared "that the church of Rome is the mistress of all churches; and that it is not lawful to depart from her decisions."

At this council, complaint was made by the Poles, against the Teutonic knights, who, armed with indulgences for the conversion of infidels, and with papal bulls for putting themselves in possession of conquered countries, gratified their military passion, while they imagined they were doing God service, by harrassing and wasting the Prussians and Poles with fire and sword. The question of law for the decision of the assembly was, whether it is right for christians to convert infidels by force of arms, and to seize their estates. The council appointed commissioners to enquire into the business; but otherwise did not decide the dispute.

At this council too, the dispute concerning administering the cup in the communion to the laity, was introduced: and those who were for the disuse of it asserted that the controversy arose in consequence of the doctrine of John Huss, and this they urged to hasten his condemnation.

The appearance of the new controversy, added to the question concerning Jerom of Prague, increased the fury of the storm against Huss, and his enemies labored day and night for his destruction. His health and strength had decayed by the rigor of his confinement. The great men of Bohemia endeavored in vain to procure justice to be done to their countryman.—Private examinations, insults and vexations, were plied to shake his constancy, and to render a public trial unnecessary. But this holy man, refusing to give answers in private, and continuing to solicit a public trial, gave his adversaries no advantage over him either through warmth or timidity. He retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and possessed his soul in patience and resignation.

The unrighteous views of the council having been thus far baffled, he was conducted to Constance, lodged in the Franciscan monastery, and loaded with chains; in which condition, excepting the time when he was under examination, he remained until the day of his condemnation.

His first hearing before the council was attended with so much confusion, through the intemperate rage of his enemies, that nothing could be concluded. In the second, in which the emperor was present, for the purpose of preserving order, Huss was accused of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some Englishmen, who knew what Wickliff held on that point, and who were ready to take for granted, that Huss dissented in no article from their countryman, pressed him vehemently on the subject. It appeared, however, that Huss followed the church of Rome on this doctrine; and the sincerity of his creed, though a mistaken one, appears from his treatise on the body of Christ.

A tedious dispute ensued concerning the refusal of Huss to join with those who condemned the errors of Wickliff. He explained himself with sufficient precision; declared, that he blamed the conduct of the archbishop of Subinco at Prague, only because he had condemned Wickliff's books without examination, and without distinction; and added, that most of the university of Prague found fault with that prelate, because he produced no reasons from the scriptures. Huss further observed to the council, that, not having been able to obtain justice from John XXIII. he had appealed from him to Jesus Christ. His seriousness in mentioning this appeal exposed him to the derision of the council. Huss, however, with great gravity affirmed, that it was always lawful to appeal from an inferior to a higher court; that in this case the Judge was infallible, full of equity and compassion, and one who would not refuse mercy to the miserable. The levity of the assembly, and the seriousness of the prisoner, were remarkably contrasted. The conscious martyr, in appealing to Jesus Christ, must have had his own mind fixed on the last judgment, and aimed at making an impression on the court by directing their attention to that awful tribunal.

John de Chlum, remained an unshaken friend to Huss, throughout all his trials, notwithstanding the multitude of his adversaries, and supported with courage and constancy the insulted victim of their fury. Huss, in his third hearing, answered the enquiries made of him concerning articles of supposed heresy, which were extracted from his works; owning, denying or explaining, with much clearness and candor, as occasions required. He was vehemently pressed to retract his errors, to own the justice of the accusations, and to submit to the decrees of the council. But neither promises nor menaces moved him. "To abjure," said he, "is to renounce an error that hath been held. But, as in many of these articles, errors are laid to my charge which I never thought of, how can I renounce them by oath? As in many of those articles, which I own to be mine, I will renounce them with all my heart, if any man will teach me sounder doctrines than what I have advanced." His conscientious integrity, however, availed him not. The court demanded a general retraction; and nothing short of that could procure him their favor. The tedious malignity of the third day's examination oppressed, at length, both the mind and body of Huss; and the more so because he had passed the preceding night sleepless through pain of the toothache. For some days before, he had also been afflicted with the gravel, and was, in other respects, in a weak state of health. At the close of the examination he was carried back to prison, whither John de Chlum followed him. "O what a comfort," said he, "was it to me, to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were had forsaken." In the same letter in which he mentions this, he begs the prayers of his friend, because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

After the departure of Huss, Sigismund, with the most unrelenting barbarity, pronounced him a heretic worthy of the flames. On the next day, a form of retraction was sent to this persecuted prisoner, which, though it was penned in ambiguous terms, plainly appeared, on the whole, to imply a confession of guilt. Huss therefore refused to sign it; and added, that he had rather be cast into the sea with a mill stone about his neck, than give offence to his pious neighbors by acknowledging that to be true which he knew to be false; that he had preached patience and constancy to others, and that he was willing to show an example of these graces, and hoped by divine assistance to be enabled to do so.

We have constantly seen in the course of this history, that the holiness of heart and life, which real christians have evidenced from age to age, has been connected with the peculiar doctrines of christianity. Sometimes one of these doctrines, and sometimes another, constituted the prominent feature of their profession; but it is in vain to look for men of real holiness and virtue, who were inimical or even indifferent to the principles of the gospel. Huss dwelt largely upon the depravity of human nature, and taught clearly the necessity of divine influences to bring men to be holy in heart and life. By distinguishing those, whom God hath chosen to be his peculiar people in Christ, and are evidently pointed out, by their practical holiness, as different from the rest of mankind, he gave offence. Undoubtedly his open rebukes of sin, both by his public preaching and writings, and the uniform purity and innocence of his manners, had inflamed the tempers of the great men of the age, both in church and state. It was, however, scarcely to be expected that the council of Constance should, even upon their own principles, proceed to condemn to the flames without the least proof of heresy, an upright man, because he refused to acknowledge that to be true which he believed to be false; or that this same council should justify the deceit and perfidy of their imperial president: their conduct, therefore, is to be considered as a striking proof, not only of the general depravity of human nature, but also of the general wickedness of the Roman church.

The council settled, before hand, after what manner Huss was to be treated, in case he should retract. He was to have been degraded from the priesthood, and to be forever shut up between four walls. This was the only reward, which the unfeeling tyrants had intended to bestow on him, in the event of his wounding his conscience to gratify them. It would be erroneous to lay the whole weight of blame on the popes, on account of the enormities of the church of Rome. It was generally and systematically corrupt; it had recently deposed three popes; it was, at present, without a pope, and yet was guilty of crimes, not less heinous than the worst which the pontiffs ever committed.

The council exhorted Huss, according to his own account, written the night before his death, to pronounce every one of the articles, which had been extracted from his books, to be erroneous; but he absolutely refused to accede to so unreasonable a requisition, except they would, from the scriptures, *prove* his doctrine to be incorrect.

The emperor and council, having tried their utmost to induce him to recant, and Huss remaining firm in his determination not to give up his doctrines, unless convinced of his error from scripture evidence, he was again brought before the council in the presence of the emperor, the princes of the empire, and an incredible concourse of people. The bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from those words of St. Paul, "*that the body of sin might be destroyed*." With the grossest ignorance, or the most virulent and indecent malice, he perverted the words to the purpose of the council. "Destroy heresies and errors," said he, "but chiefly that obstinate heretic," pointing to the prisoner. While they were reading the articles extracted, or pretended to be extracted, from his writings, Huss was beginning to answer to each distinctly, but was told that he might answer to them all at the same time, and was ordered at present to be silent. He expostulated in vain on the unreasonableness of this injunction. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he begged the prelates in God's name to indulge him in the freedom of speech, that he might justify himself before the people; "after which," said he, "you may dispose of me as you think fit." But the prelates persisting in their refusal, he kneeled down, and with uplifted eyes and hands, with a loud voice recommended his cause to the Judge of all the earth. Being accused in the article of the sacrament, of having maintained that the material bread remains after consecration, he loudly declared, that he never believed or taught so. Nothing could be more iniquitous than this charge, which he had fully refuted on his former examination. But the council was determined to burn him as a heretic, and it behoved them to exhibit, at any rate, some shew of proving his heretical opinions. A still more shameless accusation was introduced. It was said, "A certain doctor bears witness, that Huss gave out, that he should become the fourth person in the trinity." "What is the name of that doctor?" replied the prisoner, protesting against the charge as a flagrant calumny, and making an orthodox confession of his faith on the subject of the Trinity. Nevertheless, the bishop who had read the accusation, refused to mention the doctor's name. Being again upbraided with his appeal to Jesus Christ, "See," said he, with his hands lifted up towards heaven, "most gracious Savior, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised, when, overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God, thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed, we may have recourse to the judgment of God. Yes," continued he, turning to the assembly, "I have maintained, and do still maintain, that an appeal to Jesus Christ is most just and right, because HE can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be overreached by artifice. I came voluntarily to this council, under the public faith of the emperor here present." In pronouncing these last words, he looked earnestly at Sigismund, who blushed at the sudden and unexpected rebuke.

Sentence was then pronounced both against John Huss and his books; and he was ordered to be degraded. The bishops clothed him in the priest's garments, and put a chalice into his hands. While they were thus employed, Huss said, that "the Jews put a white garment on our Lord Jesus Christ to mock him, when Herod delivered him to Pilate," and he made reflections of the same kind on each of the sacerdotal ornaments. When the prisoner was fully apparelled, the prelates once more exhorted him to retract, and to this exhortation he replied with his usual firmness.—They then caused him to come down from the stool on which he stood, and pronounce these words, "O cursed Judas, who, having forsaken the counsel of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." But God was with the martyr, who cried aloud, "I trust in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it this very day in his kingdom." They then took from him of all his vestments, uttering a curse on stripping him of each. Having completed his degredation, by the addition of some other ridiculous insults not worthy of a distinct relation, they put a paper coronet on his head, on which they had painted three devils, with this inscription, ARCH-HERETIC and said, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "I am glad," said the martyr, "to wear this crown of ignominy for the love of him who wore a crown of thorns."

When the painted paper was put upon his head, one of the bishops said, "Now we commit thy soul to the devil." "But I," said Huss, "commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ; unto thee I commend my spirit, which thou hast redeemed." The council then ordered this sentence to be pronounced, namely, "*The holy synod of Constance declares, that John Huss ought to be given up to the secular power, and does accordingly so give him up, considering that the church of God has no more to do with him.*"

Sigismund committed the execution of Huss to the elector Palatine. The martyr, walking amidst his guards, declared his innocence to the people. When he came near the place of execution, he kneeled and prayed with such fervor, that some of the people said aloud, "What this man has done before we know not; but now we hear him offer up most excellent prayers to God." The elector Palatine prevented him from speaking to the people, and ordered him to be burned. "Lord Jesus," said Huss aloud, "I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to forgive all my enemies." His paper crown falling from his head, the soldiers put it on again, saying, that "it must be burnt with the devils, whom he had served." His neck was fastened to a stake, and the wood was piled about him. The elector advanced once more on the often repeated subject of retraction. "What I have written and taught," rejoined Huss, "was to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin; and I do gladly seal what I have written and taught with my blood." The elector withdrawing, the fire was kindled, and Huss was soon suffocated, having called upon God as long as he could speak. Thus, by a death which has affixed eternal infamy on the council of Constance, slept in Jesus the celebrated John Huss, one of the most upright and blameless of men. Human depravity has not often produced a scene so flagiciously iniquitous, and so much calculated to bring disgrace on the Roman church. The uncommon pains taken to prevent his death by a retraction, demonstrates the conviction of the council, that they were doing what they could not justify to their own consciences. At the same time the graçe of God was marvellously displayed in supporting and strengthening the martyr, who appears indeed to have exhibited all the graces of a true disciple of Christ.

Toward the latter end of the year 1415, a letter was sent to the council from Bohemia, signed by about 60 principal persons, barons, noblemen and others of that kingdom, an extract of which is as follows: "We know not from what motive you have condemned John Huss, bachelor of divinity and preacher of the gospel. Ye have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We wrote in his vindication to Sigismund, king of the Romans. This apology of ours ought to have been communicated to your congregations; but we have been told that ye burnt it in contempt of us. We protest therefore, with the heart as well as with the lips, that John Huss was a man very honest, just, and orthodox; that for many years he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners; that during all those years he explained to us and to our subjects, the gospel and the books of the Old and New Testament, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the church; and that he has left writings behind him in which he constantly abhors all heresy. He taught us also to detest every thing heretical. In his discourses he constantly exhorted us to peace and charity, and his own life exhibited to us a distinguished example of these virtues. After all the inquiry which we have made, we can find no blame attached to the doctrine or life of the said John Huss; but on the contrary every thing pious, laudable and worthy of a true pastor. Ye have not only disgraced us by *his* condemnation, but have also unmercifully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death Jerom of Prague, a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also have ye condemned unconvicted. Notwithstanding all that hath passed, we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of the gospel of Christ, and of his faithful preachers." This letter was unanimously approved in an assembly of Bohemian lords held at Prague.

The council, startled at the bold expostulations of this letter, yet being still determined to maintain their own unjust authority, at length, partly by promises, and partly by threatenings, induced Jerom of Prague to retract his sentiments. In this, Jerom anathamatized the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss, and declared that he believed every thing that the council believed. He even added, that if, in future, any doctrine should escape from him contrary to his recantation, he would submit to everlasting punishment! Thus was disgraced before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior parts, and of great learning and fortitude. This is an event, memorable in the annals of human imbecility! Consider diligently the instruction which it affords. The power and the mercy of God, in owning his fallen servant, and in afterward restoring and supporting him, were magnified, in this instance, in a very striking manner.

Jerom, after his retraction, was remanded to prison, with some enlargement of liberty.

There were some, notwithstanding the recantation of Jerom, who insisted upon his being tried a second time. The council, therefore, proceeded to examine him again upon the articles formerly exhibited against him, and upon new articles, then, for the first time, brought forward. The prisoner refused to be sworn, because they at first denied him the liberty of defence.

Then it was that this great man began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius and eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages.

Having obtained freedom of speech, during his trial, in his defence he said, "I came to Constance to defend John Huss, because I had advised him to go thither, and had promised to come to his assistance, in case he should be oppressed. Nor am I ashamed here to make public confession of my own cowardice. I confess and tremble while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented, against my conscience to the condemnation of Wickliff and Huss." He then declared that he disowned his recantation, as the greatest crime of which he had ever been guilty; and that he was determined to his last breath to adhere to the principles of those two men, which were as sound and pure, as their lives were holy and blameless. He excepted indeed Wickliff's opinion of the sacrament, and declared his agreement with the Roman church in the article of transubstantiation. Having concluded his speech, he was carried back to prison, and was there visited by several persons, who hoped to reclaim him, but in vain.

Jerom, having been brought again before the council, the bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from these words, "*He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart.*" He exhorted the prisoner not to show himself incorrigible, as he had hitherto done.—He paid some tribute of praise to his extraordinary abilities, and at the same time extolled the lenity and generosity with which he had been treated by the council. Jerom, raising himself on a bench, undertook to confute the preacher. He declared again, that he had done nothing in his whole life, of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation; that he revoked it from his very soul, as also the letter which he had been induced to write on this subject to the Bohemians; that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood by making that recantation; that he esteemed John Huss a holy man; and that he knew no heresy of which he had been guilty, unless they should call by that name, his open disapprobation of the vices of the clergy. That if, after this declaration, credit should still be given to the false witness borne against Huss, he should consider the fathers of the council themselves as unworthy of all belief. "This pious man," said Jerom, alluding to John Huss, "could not bear to see the revenues of the church, which were principally designed for the maintenance of the poor, and for works of liberality, spent in debauchery with women, in feasts, hounds, furniture, gawdy apparel, and other expenses, unworthy of christianity."

The firmness, eloquence, and zeal of Jerom, sensibly affected the council. They proposed to him once more to retract. But he replied, "Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly; but after my death I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence you must appear to answer me." After sentence had been pronounced against him, Jerom was delivered to the secular power, and was treated with scorn and insult, similar to that which his friend Huss had experienced. He put the mitre with his own hands on his head, saying he was glad to wear it for the sake of Him, who was crowned with one of thorns. As he went to execution, he sung the apostles' creed, and the hymns of the church, with a loud voice and a cheerful countenance. He kneeled at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sung a paschal hymn at that time much in vogue in the church.

"Hail happy day, and ever be adored,
"When hell was conquered by great heaven's Lord."

The executioner having approached to the pile behind his back, lest Jerom should see him, "Come forward," said the martyr, "and put fire to it before my face." He continued alive in the flames a full quarter of an hour, and sustained the torment with great fortitude and courage. When he was much scorched with the fury of the fire, and almost smothered in its flames, he was heard to cry out, "O Lord God, have mercy on me! have mercy on me!" And a little afterward, "Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth." By and by, the wind parted the flames, and exhibited his body full of large blisters, a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; yet even then his lips are said to have continued still moving, as if his mind was actuated by intense devotion.

Though the acquaintance, which Jerom had with the truth of the gospel, appears to have been partial and imperfect; yet the knowledge which he had, doubtless respected the essential doctrines of christianity; and his spirit and constancy, in his last sufferings, his dependance on the grace of Christ, his expectation of a blessed resurrection, and his humble confession of sinfulness and unworthiness, sufficiently distinguish him from the stoic philosopher, or the mere moralist, who, whatever portion he may have of the first of these qualities, is totally void of all the rest.

Jerom endured his last sufferings with a cheerful countenance, and with more than stoical constancy.

By the acts of the council of Constance, the wickedness of the ecclesiastical system, then prevalent in Europe, was clearly demonstrated. Though all the knowledge and ability, which the Roman hierarchy could afford, were collected at Constance, yet the able and learned fathers of that council were so far from reforming the evils of what they called the church, that they proved it more certainly to be Antichrist. The whole of the clerical establishment then concurred in the support of iniquity. The real gospel itself was neither understood, nor preached, nor valued in the Roman church. They trifled respecting sins with the most scandalous levity, and persecuted to death those very persons who earnestly opposed the corruptions of the times. The glory of God, the truths of the gospel, and real kingdom of Jesus Christ, having been kept out of sight by all who constituted that council, none of them regarded reformation much further than it concerned their own interested views, and nothing that deserved the name of reformation ensued.

In the latter end of the year 1417, the council of Constance, elected Otho de Colonna pope, who took the name of Martin V. How destitute he was of real piety, and of all true knowledge of the scripture doctrines of salvation, and what were the views and sentiments of that council, will appear from the bull by which it was dissolved. An extract of it is as follows: "Martin, bishop, servant of the servants of God, at the request of the sacred council, we dismiss it. Moreover, by the authority of the Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and by our own authority, we grant to all the members of the council plenary absolution of all their sins once in their lives, so that every one of them, within two months after the notification of this privilege has come to his knowledge, may enjoy the benefit of the said absolution in form. We also grant them the same privilege in the moment of death; and we extend it to the domestics, as well as to the masters, on condition, that, from the day of the notification, both the one and the other fast every Friday, during a whole year, for the absolution granted to them while alive; and another year for their absolution in the moment of death, unless there be some lawful impediment, in which case they shall do other works of piety. And after the second year they shall be obliged to fast on Fridays during life, or to do some other acts of piety, on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God and of the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul."

The council of Constance began to sit in 1414, and was dissolved in 1418. In that council a great effort was made by the united wisdom of Europe, but in vain, to effect that reformation, which God alone in his own time produced in such a manner, as to illustrate the divine declaration, Salvation is "not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

CHAPTER III.

The Hussites till the beginning of the Reformation.

THE Bohemians having heard of the murder of John Huss and Jerom of Prague with great indignation, forty thousand of the followers of Huss assembled on a mountain a few miles from Prague under their leaders Zisca and Nicolas, where the latter administered to them the communion in both kinds. They had taken the field to oppose the Romish hierarchy with fire and sword; a bloody war ensued, which continued 13 years with various success, and with many inhuman cruelties on both sides. The main body of the discontented Bohemians were at length satisfied with the cup in the sacrament, and with the administration of the ordinance in their own language.

Those who differed from the church of Rome, only in the affair of the communion in both kinds, were denominated Calixtines, from Calix, the Latin name for cup. Those who were more thorough in their opposition to the abominations of the church of Rome, and who resembled the Waldenses, in the great articles of their faith, were called Taborites, from the circumstance of their having accommodated themselves with tents, when they took the field to oppose the papal power: the word *tabor*, in the Bohemian language, signifying tent.

The Taborites, besides the scriptural celebration of the sacrament, desired to see a real reformation of the church, and the establishment of purity of doctrine and discipline. But, after a long series of military confusion, they found themselves still a persecuted body of men; and those of them, who had been inclined to have recourse to the sword, were gradually convinced, that patient faith and perseverance in prayer are the proper arms of the christian soldier. Never was there a more striking instance of the inefficacy of caral weapons in defending the church of Christ. By this long and bloody war, which the Bohemians carried on with great success, and with undaunted courage and fortitude, they gained only two privileges, merely of an external nature in the administration of the Lord's supper. With these the majority of the people remained content, and still adhered to the papal abominations, while the real christians were exposed as much as ever to the persecutions of the church of Rome, and were not only abandoned, but also cruelly treated by their brethren.

In the mean time, Rokyzan, a Calixtine, was allured by the hopes of the archbishopric of Prague, to second the views of the papal party. He was elected archbishop in 1436, and labored to induce the Bohemians to be content without the cup, and in all other things to conform to the Romish doctrine and worship. Rokyzan, fearing he should lose his dignity, could not be prevailed on openly to oppose the Romish corruptions; he however, advised the Hussites to edify one another in private, and gave them some good books for that purpose. He also obtained for them permission to withdraw to the lordship of Lititz, on the confines of Silesia and Moravia, and there to regulate their plan of worship according to their own consciences.

About the year 1453, a number of Hussites repaired to Lititz, and chose Michael Bradazius for their minister. He, with some assistants, under the direction of Gregory, who was in a great measure the founder of the unity of the Hussite brethren, held a conference in 1457, in which the plan of the Hussite church, or that of the United Brethren, was formed; idolatrous rites were prohibited, and a strictness of discipline, resembling that of the primitive christian church, was instituted. But in this they failed to promote the spirit of godliness to the degree they had expected, and this through a neglect of an accurate system of christian doctrines. As holy exercises of heart do take place in the view of truth, the inward life and vigor of their church did not correspond with the purity of its external system, and distressed consciences could not find among them that comfort and liberty which are necessary to the existence of godliness to any great extent. In one point, however, they proved themselves the real followers of Christ. They determined to make use of no carnal weapons for the defence of religion; and no more to suffer the name of Hussites to be disgraced by such unchristian methods as it formerly had been.

They were soon called to the exercise of that passive courage which they had professed. The increase of their congregations in Bohemia and Moravia, was beheld with suspicion both by Romish and Calixtine priests, and they were accused of having an intention to excite tumults and seize the government. The Hussites were then loaded with the calumnies of their enemies and suffered persecution. The United Brethren, had hoped for support in Rokyzan, whose ministry had formerly been useful to their souls; but he, then living in miserable grandeur, dearly purchased at the expense of a good conscience, afforded them none. The following extract of a letter which the brethren wrote to him, while they labored under the imputations of promoting needless divisions, will give the reader some idea of their principles and spirit.—"Your sermons have been highly grateful and pleasant to us. You earnestly exhorted us to flee from the horrible errors of Antichrist, revealed in these last days. You taught us that the devil introduced the abuses of the sacraments, and that men placed a false hope of salvation in them. You confirmed to us from the writings of the apostles and from the examples of the primitive church, the true doctrine of those divine instructions. Being distressed in our consciences, and distracted by a variety of opinions, which prevailed in the church, we were induced to follow your advice, which was to attend the ministry of Peter Chelezitius, whose discourses and writings gave us a clearer insight into christian truths; insomuch that when we saw your life and practice were at variance with your doctrine, we were constrained to entertain doubts concerning your religious character. When we conversed with you on this occasion, your answer was to this effect, 'I know that your sentiments are true; but, if I should patronize your cause, I must incur the same infamy and disgrace which you have.' When we understood that you would desert us, rather than relinquish the honors of the world, having no refuge but in God, we implored him to make known to us the mystery of his will. As a gracious Father, he hath looked upon our afflictions, and hath heard our prayers. Trusting in our God, we have assembled ourselves in the unity of the faith by which we have been justified through Jesus Christ, and of which we were made partakers in conformity to the image of his death, that we might be the heirs of eternal life. Do not imagine, that we have separated ourselves from you on account of certain rites and ceremonies instituted by men; but on account of evil and corrupt doctrines. For if we could, in connexion with you, have preserved the true faith of Jesus Christ our Lord, we never should have made this separation."

Thus does it appear that the Hussite brethren were not mere schismatics, but properly reformed protestants, who separated from the church of Rome on account of the essentials of godliness, and because, in that church, they could not preserve the genuine faith of the gospel, and purity of worship. And the constancy with which they endured persecution, showed, that they had not received the grace of God in vain. For they were declared unworthy of the common rights of subjects; and in the depth of winter, were driven out of the cities and villages, with the forfeiture of all their effects. The sick were thrown into the open fields, where many perished with cold and hunger.—Various sorts of torture were inflicted on the brethren: numbers were barbarously murdered, and many died in the prisons.

During those melancholy scenes, Gregory, nephew of Rokyzan, was distinguished by his zeal, fortitude and charity. To these virtues he added prudence and discretion, of which he gave a remarkable instance.—The governor of Prague, apprehending danger to the brethren to be at hand, had the kindness to warn Gregory to withdraw from that place, which he accordingly did. Some of the brethren were disgusted at this conduct, and boasted that the rack was their breakfast, and the flames their dinner. Some of these men, however, failed on the trial, and recanted to save their lives; though of the lapsed, some bemoaned their fall, and recovered by repentance. Gregory himself, on another occasion, underwent with patience the tortures of the rack. In the extremity of his suffering he fell into a swoon, and was believed to have expired. His uncle Rockyzan hastened to the prison at the news, and lamented over him in these words, "My dear Gregory, I would to God I were where thou art." So strong was the power of conscience still in this unhappy archbishop! But Gregory recovered, and was preserved to the church to a very advanced age.

The brethren having heard of the sensibility discovered by Rokyzan, addressed themselves to him again; but his answers were of the same kind as formerly. He was determined not to suffer persecution; and they in their farewel letter, said to him with more zeal than discretion, "thou art of the world, and wilt perish with the world." The persecution took a different turn; the Hussites were no longer tortured, but were driven out of the country; where they were obliged to hide themselves in mountains and woods, and to live in the wilderness. In this situation, in 1467, they came to a resolution to form a church among themselves, and to appoint their own ministers. In 1480 they received a great increase of their numbers from the accession of Waldensian refugees, who escaped out of Austria, where Stephen, the last bishop of the Waldenses in that province, was burnt alive, and where the vehemence of persecution no longer allowed this people to live in security. A union was easily formed between the Waldenses and the Hussites, on account of the similarity of their sentiments and manners. The refugees, however, found their situation but little meliorated by a junction with a people, who were obliged to conceal themselves in thickets and in clefts of rocks; and who, to escape detection by the smoke, made no fires except in the night, when they read the word of God and prayed. Their sufferings were great. Rokyzan in his latter days, persecuted them, and died in despair about the year 1471.

In 1481 the Hussites were banished from Moravia, but in six years afterwards they returned into that country. In the beginning of the 16th century, they had 200 congregations in Bohemia and Moravia.—Their most violent persecutors were the Calixtines, who, for the most part, resembled the papists, except in that from which their name was derived.

Hence closes, for the present, the history of the Hussites, who doubtless as a body of men, feared God and served him in the gospel of his Son. They also maintained a degree of discipline among themselves vastly superior to that of any other who bore the christian name, except the churches of the Waldenses. Both of these were, however, defective in evangelical LIGHT. But God in mercy was then hastening an exhibition of this, in the reformation, which, after we shall have very briefly surveyed the principal events of the 15th century, must engage our attention.

CHAPTER IV.

A Brief Review of the Fifteenth Century.

THE most remarkable events of this period, appear to have been directed by Divine Providence with a particular subserviency to the reformation.

The Turks had become very formidable in the East, and were extending their conquests to the West. Europe, though greatly oppressed by their persevering cruelties, neither humbled itself before God, nor took any measures to check their ambition. But God was then preparing the way to bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. Many learned men, on account of the troubles in the East, emigrated from Greece into Europe, where they revived the study of letters, and hereby prepared the way for the demolition of idolatry and superstition. About the year 1440, the inestimable art of printing was invented. Learning began then to be cultivated with vast ardor; classical knowledge was greatly increased. Learned men were furnished with critical skill and ingenuity, of which they availed themselves in the instruction of the ignorant. By the labors of the learned Erasmus, who arose about this time, monastic su-

superstition received a wound which has never been healed.

Thus, under the care of Divine Providence, materials were collected for that beautiful edifice which soon began to arise. In the 15th century the great value and use of these materials scarcely appeared; the same corruptions, both of faith and practice, which have so often been described, still prevailed in all their horrors.

In the mean time there were some individuals, who, though not connected with any particular christian societies, evinced the power of godliness. Among these was Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman, who, having gone to Rome, to improve his understanding in religious concerns, found the corruptions of that venal city astonishingly great, and that the habitation of St. Peter had even become a den of thieves. His zealous spirit was stirred within him, to give an open testimony to evangelical truth. By continual preaching he incurred the hatred of the ruling powers, was degraded from the priesthood, and burnt, four years after his arrival at Rome. In 1499, Jerom Savanarola, an Italian monk, with two Friars, Dominic and Silvester, were burnt at Florence for preaching the dictrine of free justification through faith in Christ.

Vincent Ferrer, though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, was a shining model of piety. At the age of forty-two he began to preach with great fervor in every town from Avignon towards Valentia. His word is said to have been powerful among the Jews, the Mahometans, and others. He labored abundantly in Spain, France, Italy, England, Scotland, and Ireland; and by the desire of Henry V. made Normandy, and Britanny, the theatre of his labors during the last two years of his life. He died at the age of 62.

The following is a quotation from his book on spiritual life, and will give an idea of his piety: "Do you desire to study to advantage? Consult God more than books, and ask him humbly, to make you understand what you read. Study drains the mind and heart. Go from time to time to be refreshed at the feet of

Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose there give fresh vigor and new light: interrupt your study by short, but fervent ejaculations. Science is the gift of the Father of lights. Do not consider it as attainable merely by your own mind and industry."

Bernardin of Sienna, who must close this concise review of the 15th century, was born in the year 1380, and on account of his uncommon zeal in preaching, was called "the burning coal." He gave this advice to clergymen, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and the Holy Ghost will give you a wisdom which no adversary can withstand." This excellent man expressed an earnest wish to be able to cry out with a trumpet through the world, "How long will ye love simplicity?"

CENTURY XVI.

CHAPTER I.

The Reformation under the conduct of Luther.

THE 16th century opened with a most gloomy prospect. Corruption, both in doctrine and practice, had exceeded all bounds; and Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing evangelical. Notwithstanding the repeated attempts which had been made, no extensive or permanent reformation of the church had been effected. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrouled patrons of impiety. The scandalous crimes of the court of Rome did not yet operate to lessen its dominion, nor lead men to make a serious investigation of religion.

But the time was fast approaching, when the adorable Providence of God, raised up a man, who was led from step to step, by a series of circumstances far beyond his original intentions, and in a manner which evinced the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man, to be the instrument, rather than the agent of a most important reformation.

This was Martin Luther, who was born in the year 1483 in Saxony. His father was universally esteemed for his integrity, who gave his son an early and very liberal education, so that having made a great proficiency in learning, he was made master of arts in the university of Erfurth, at the age of 20. He then commenced the study of the civil law. But his purpose was diverted from this, by a very solemn and alarming Providence. While walking in the fields with one of his most intimate friends, his companion was suddenly killed by lightning. Luther was terrified, and formed the hasty resolution of withdrawing from the world, and of throwing himself into the monastery of Erfurth, which he entered in the year 1505.

In a manuscript history, extending from the year 1524 to 1541, composed by Frederic Myconius, a very able coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon, the author describes the state of religion in the beginning of this century in the following striking terms. "The passion and satisfaction of Christ, were treated as a bare history, like the Odyssey of Homer: concerning faith, by which the righteousness of the Redeemer and eternal life are apprehended, there was the greatest silence: Christ was described as a severe judge, ready to condemn all who were destitute of the intercession of saints and of pontifical interest. In the room of Christ were substituted as saviors and intercessors, the virgin Mary, like a pagan Diana, and other saints, who, from time to time, had been created by the popes. Nor were men, it seems, entitled to the benefit of their prayers, except they deserved it of them by their works. What sort of works were necessary for this end was distinctly explained; not the works prescribed in the decalogue, and enjoined on all mankind but such as enriched the priests and monks. Those, who died neglecting these, were consigned to hell, or at least to purgatory, till they were redeemed from it by a satisfaction made either by themselves or their proxies. The frequent pronunciation of the Lord's prayer, the salutation of the virgin, and the recitations of the canoncial hours, constantly engaged those who undertook to be religious. An incredible mass of ceremonious observances was every where visible; while gross wickedness was practised, under the encouragement of indulgences, by which the guilt of the crimes was easily expiated. The preaching of the word was the least part of the episcopal function: rites and processions employed the bishops perpetually, when engaged in religious exercises. The number of clergy was enormous, and their lives were most scandalous. I speak of those whom I have known in the town of Gothen, &c." A Greek testament could not then be procured at any price in all Germany. Even the university of Paris, the first of all the famous schools of learning, could not furnish a single person capable of supporting a controversy against Luther on the foundation of scripture. Scarcely any christian doctor had then a critical knowledge of the word of God.

It was at such a time of gross darkness, when the christian nations differed very little from the pagan, except in the name, that the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the gospel, more judicious and evangelical, than had ever been made since the days of Augustine.

That the reader may understand the necessity and importance of the reformation; it may be here stated that the popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. According to this, the church imposed painful works or sufferings on offenders, which, having been discharged or undergone with humility, were called satisfactions: and when regarding the fervor of the penitents, or other good works, she remitted some part of the task, that was called "an indulgence." She even pretended to extend the benefit of indulgences beyond the grave, and that they were valid in heaven.

The foundation of all this system was generally believed to be this: that there is in Christ and the saints an infinite treasure of merit; the saints having done works of supererogation. It was pretended that this treasure was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the see of Rome. This was sold for money, at the discretion of the Pontiffs to those who were able and willing to purchase. Few were found disposed to undergo the course of a severe penance of unpleasant austerities, when they could afford to commute for it by pecuniary payments. The popes, and under them the bishops and clergy, particularly the Dominican and Franciscan friars, had the disposal of this treasure; and as the pontiffs had the power of canonizing new saints at their own will, the fund was constantly on the increase. So long as this system could maintain its credit, the riches of this flagitious church, thus secularized under the appearance of religion, became a sea without a shore. A practice, thus scandalously corrupt, was connected with the grossest ignorance of the nature of gospel grace. And in fact the preachers of indulgences, whether popes themselves, or their ministers, held out to the people, with sufficient clearness, that the inheritance of eternal life could be purchased. " Pope Leo X. making use of that power, which his predecessors had usurped over all christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money!!!"

From this the reader will perceive, that, for the demolition of this impious system, the right knowledge of the scripture doctrine of justification was the only adequate remedy. To revive this appears to have been the most capital object of the reformation. And it is not difficult to see that the state of mankind was, at that time, peculiarly adapted to the reception of so rich a display of gospel grace. Their whole religion was one enormous mass of bondage. Terrors beset them on every side; and the fiction of purgatory was ever teeming with ghosts and apparitions. Faith in simplicity, grounded on the divine promises, connected with real humility, and productive of hearty and grateful obedience, hardly existed amidst the mazes of corruption. No certain rest could be afforded to the weary mind, and a state of allowed doubt and anxiety was recommended by the papal system. What a joyful doctrine then was that of remission of sins through Christ alone, received by faith! a doctrine indeed to be found every where in the scriptures; but this was almost unknown among the common people at the beginning of the reformation.

The Aristotelian philosophy, which knew nothing of native depravity, which allowed nothing to be criminal but certain external, flagitious actions, and which was unacquainted with the idea of any righteouness of grace, imputed to the sinner, greatly prevailed previous to the reformation. But the person, whom God raised up, particularly at this time, when the generality of mankind were following their own self-righteous schemes, to instruct an ignorant world, was most remarkably eminent for self knowledge. Luther knew himself; also he knew the scriptural grounds on which he stood in his controversies with the ecclesiastical rulers. His zeal was disinterested, his courage, undaunted. Accordingly when he had once erected the standard of truth, he continued to uphold it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the gratitude and esteem of all succeeding generations.

CHAPTER II.

The beginning of the Controversy concerning Indulgences.

POPE Alexander VII. the most flagitious of men, died in the year 1503. Pius III. succeeded him, and in less than one year after, he was succeeded by Julius II. Previous to his election the cardinals agreed upon an oath, which they obliged the new pontiff to take after his election that a general council should be called within two years to reform the church. The effect of this measure, which so strongly implied the consent of the christian world to the necessity of a reformation, was the council of Pisa. At this, nothing good was done. Julius, by his intrigues had the council dissolved. He died in 1513, after having, by his military ambition, violence and rapacity, filled the christian world with blood and confusion.

Leo X. succeeded; a man famous for the encouragement of letters and the fine arts, and deservedly celebrated among the patrons of learned men. Though refined and humanized, yet an excessive magnificence, a voluptuous indolence, and above all, a total want of religious principle, rendered him perhaps more strikingly void of every sacerdotal qualification than any preceding pontiff. He used no exertion to evince that he had a sincere reverence for religion. It was during the pontificate of this man, that Providence gave the severest blow to the authority of the Roman hierarchy, which it had ever received since the days of Gregory II.

Both before and after his exaltation, he opposed with dexterity and success the laudable attempts for a reformation which have been mentioned.

In the year 1517 the spirit of Luther was excited to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the negligent, and to oppose the scandalous practices of ambitious and interested ecclesiastical rulers. It was at this time, that the temerity of the existing hierarchy was such, and so infatuated with abominations, that the opportunity seems purposely to have been afforded to their opponents for beginning that reformation which was eventually to prove destructive to their power and influence.

Leo X. after he had governed the church almost five years, having involved himself in embarrassments by his prodigal expenses of various kinds, and being desirous to complete the erection of St. Peter's church at Rome, which had been begun by his predecessor Julius II. after his example had recourse to the sale of indulgences. These he published throughout the christian world, granting freely to all, who would pay money for the building of St. Peter's church, the licence of eating eggs and cheese in the time of lent. This is one of the many ridiculous circumstances which attended Leo's indulgences, and it is gravely related by the papal historian. The promulgation of them was committed to Albert, brother of the elector of Brandenberg, who received immense profits from their sale. John Tetzel, a bold, enterprizing monk of uncommon impudence, was employed by Albert as sub-agent, and executed his iniquitous commission not only with matchless insolence, indecency and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far as to derogate from the all sufficient power and influence of the merits of Christ. He declaimed concerning the unlimited power of the pope and the efficacy of indulgences. The people believed, that the moment any person had paid the money for the indulgence, he became certain of his salvation, and that the souls, for whom the indulgences were bought, were instantly released from purgatory. Tetzel even boasted, that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted by his preaching. He assured the purchasers of them, that their crimes, however enormous, would be forgiven. In the usual form of absolution, written with his own hand, he said, "I, by the authority of Jesus Christ, through the merits of his most holy passion, and by the authority of his blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and of our most holy pope, delegated to me as commissioner, do absolve thee: first from all ecclesiastical censures however incurred; secondly, from all sins committed by thee, however enormous, for so far the keys of the sacred church extend: and I do this by remitting to thee all the punishments due to thee in purgatory on account of thy crimes, and I restore thee to the innocence and purity in which thou wast when baptized, so that the gates of punishment may be shut to thee when dying, and the gates of paradise be opened."

In regard to the effect of indulgences in delivering persons from the supposed torments of purgatory, the gross declarations of Tetzel in public are well known. "The moment the money tinkles in the chest, your father's soul mounts up out of purgatory."

The indulgences were farmed out to the best bidders, and the undertakers employed such deputies to carry on the traffic, as they thought the most likely to promote their lucrative views. The inferior officers, concerned in this commerce, were daily seen in public houses, indulging themselves in riot and voluptousness. In fine, whatever the greatest enemy of popery could have wished, was exhibited with the most undisguised impudence and temerity, as if on purpose to render that wicked ecclesiastical system infamous before all mankind.

The prodigious sale of indulgences evinces both the profound ignorance of the age, and also the power of superstitious fears, with which the consciences of men were then distressed. This, however, was the very situation of things which opened the way for the reception of the gospel. But who was to proclaim it in its native beauty and simplicity ? The princes, the bishops, and the learned men of the times, saw all this scandalous traffic, but none was found possessing the knowledge, the courage, and the honesty, necessary to detect the fraud, and to lay open to mankind the true doctrine of salvation by the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. But at length an obscure pastor appeared, who alone began to erect the standard of sound religion. No man who believes that "the preparation of the heart is from the Lord, will for a moment doubt whether Martin Luther, in this great undertaking, was moved by the spirit of God.

This extraordinary man, was an Augustine monk, and professor or lecturer in the university of Wittemberg in Saxony. That was a college of students and society of monks. Frederic the wise, elector of Saxony, ardently desirous of promoting literary knowledge, always showed a steady regard to Luther, on account of his skill and industry in advancing the reputation of that infant seminary, then low in its revenues and exterior appearance. Luther preached also from time to time, and heard confessions. In the memorable year 1517, certain persons, repeating their confessions before him, and owning their atrocious sins, refused to comply with the penances which he enjoined on them, because they said, they were possessed of diplomas of indulgences. Luther was struck with the absurdity, and refused them absolution. The persons rejected, complained loudly to Tetzel. He stormed and frowned, and menaced every one who dared to oppose him; and sometimes ordered a pile of wood to be constructed and set on fire, to strike terror into the minds of heretics. Luther, then only 34 years old, was vigorous both in mind and body, fresh from the schools, and fervent in the scriptures. He saw crowds flock to Wittemberg and the neighboring towns to purchase indulgences, and having no clear idea of the nature of that traffic, yet sensible of the obvious evils with which it must be attended, he began to signify, in a gentle manner from the pulpit, that the people might be better employed than in running from place to place to procure INDULGENCES. So cautiously did this great man begin a work, the consequences of which he did not foresee. He did not then even know who were the receivers of the money. He wrote to Albert, archbishop of Mentz, who had appointed Tetzel to this employment, entreating him to withdraw the licence of Tetzel, and expressing his fears of evil consequences from the sale. This he did, without knowing that Albert had any personal interest in the traffic. He sent him likewise certain theses which he had drawn up in the form of queries concerning this subject, and expressed with the greatest caution and modesty. His conscience was alarmed at the prevailing evils, but he knew not well where to fix the blame of them. He wrote also to the bishop of Brandenberg, with whom he was a favorite. He, seeing the dangerous ground Luther was taking, replied, "You will oppose the church, you cannot think in what troubles you will involve yourself; you had much better be still and quiet." The intrepid spirit of the Saxon reformer was not to be repressed. Though by no means a competent master of the points in debate, he saw they were of too great magnitude for a conscientious pastor to pass them by unnoticed. With deliberate steadiness he persevered; and having tried in vain to procure the concurrence of the dignitaries of the church, he published 95 theses, which in 15 days were spread throughout Germany. Their effect on the minds of men was rapid and powerful; though Tetzel had by threats silenced some pastors who had faintly opposed him, and though bishops and doctors, through fear of the flames remained perfectly silent.

What Luther's views and feelings were in the commencement of his opposition to the sale of indulgences, may be learned from his controversial writings published in the year 1518. In these, he thus declares: "I was compelled in my conscience to expose the scandalous sale of indulgences. I saw some seduced by them into mischievous errors, others tempted into audacious profaneness. In a word, the proclaiming and selling of pardons proceeded to such an unbounded licentiousness, that the holy church and its authorities became subjects of open derision in the public taverns. There was no occasion to excite the hatred of mankind against priests to a greater degree. The avarice and profligacy of the clergy had, for many years past, kindled the indignation of the laity. Alas! they have not a particle of respect or honor for the priesthood, except what solely arises from a fear of punishment; and I speak plainly, unless their dislike and their objection be attended to and moderated, not by mere power, but by substantial reasons and reformations, all these evils will grow worse."

Let us now listen to a few sentences of Luther, written so late as the year 1545, about 28 years after the beginning of the dispute concerning indulgences. "Before all things I entreat you, pious reader, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, to read my writings with cool consideration, and even with much pity. I wish you to know, that when I began the affair of the indulgences at the very first, I was a monk, and a most mad papist. So intoxicated was I and drenched in papal dogmas, that I would have been most ready at all times to murder or assist others in murdering any person, who should have uttered a syllable against the duty of obedience to the pope. I was a complete Saul; and there are many such yet. There were, however, and are now, others, who appear to me to adhere to the pope on the principles of Epicurus; that is for the sake of indulging their appetites; when secretly they even deride him, and are as cold as ice, if called upon to defend papacy. I was never one of these: I was always a sincere believer; I was always earnest in defending the doctrines which I professed; I went seriously to work, as one who had a horrible dread of the day of judgment, and who, from his inmost soul was anxious for salvation.

"You will find, therefore, in my earlier writings, with how much humility, on many occasions, I gave up very considerable points to the pope, which I now detest as blasphemous and abominable in the highest degree. This ERROR, my slanderers call INCONSISTENCY: but you, pious reader, will have the kindness to make some allowance on account of the times and my inexperience. I stood absolutely alone at first, and certainly I was very unlearned and very unfit to undertake matters of such vast importance. It was by accident, not willingly or by design, that I fell into these violent disputes: I call God to witness.

"In the year 1517, when I was a young preacher, and dissuaded the people from purchasing indulgences, telling them that they might employ their time much better than in listening to the greedy proclaimers of that scandalous article of sale, I felt assured I should have the pope on my side; for he himself, in his public decrees, had condemned the excesses of his agents in that business.

"My next step was to complain to my ordinary, and also to the archbishop of Mentz; but I knew not at that time that half of the money went to this last mentioned prelate, and the other half to the pope. The remonstrances of a low, mean, poor brother in Christ had no weight. Thus despised I published a brief account of the dispute, along with a sermon in the German language on the subject of indulgences; and very soon after I published also explanations of my sentiments, in which, for the honor of the pope, I contended, that the indulgences were not entirely to be condemned, but that real works of charity were of *far more consequence.*

"This was to set the world on fire, and disturb the whole order of the universe. At once, and against me single, the whole popedom rose!!"......

From these quotations, may be seen, with what views and feelings Luther commenced and prosecuted his opposition to papal indulgences. Providence had gradually prepared him for this arduous undertaking. In the second year after he had entered the monastery, he met with a Latin bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. From this he learnt there were more scripture passages extant than those which were read to the people. Also he had some beams of evangelical light darted into his mind. The same year he was refreshed in his sickness by the discourse of an old monk, who showed him that remission of sins was to be apprehended by faith alone.—With incredible ardor he now gave himself up to the study of the scriptures and the books of Augustine. At length he was regarded as the most ingenious and learned man of his order in Germany.

In 1507 he was ordained, and the next year called to the professorship at Wittemberg by Staupitius, vicar general of the Augustine monks in Germany, where a theatre was opened for the display of his talents, both as a teacher of philosophy and as a popular preacher. He excelled in both capacities, and became the wonder of his age. The exercises of his own mind, by which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was led more and more into christian truth, added a strength to his oratory, unattainable by those who speak not from the heart. Having had a profound reverence for the written word, he was led more and more into such discoveries of native depravity, as render a man low in his own eyes, and dispose him to receive the genuine gospel of Christ.

In 1510 he was sent to Rome, on business relating to his own monastery, which he discharged with so much ability and success, that on his return, he was compelled by the vicar general to assume the degree of doctor of divinity, from which time he conscientiously devoted his time and talents to the sacred office. Already he was suspected of heresy, because of his dislike to the scholastic doctrines; and he was induced, from the soundness of his understanding, and the exercises of his own heart, to reject the Aristotelian corruptions of theology, and to study the genuine doctrines of scripture.

Beyond all doubt Luther was of a choleric temper, and too much encouraged his natural talent for facetiousness. His character in other respects was very blameless and excellent. Humane, generous, and placable, he was rarely diverted from the path of equity; and, notwithstanding the uncommon vehemence of his disposition, was often submissive and condescending. With an exquisite sensibility and readiness of conception, with a zeal and an imagination, which never remitted their ardor for a single moment, he was perfectly free from enthusiasm; and with a great capacity and unparalleled intrepidity, he seems to have been devoid of ambition and contented to live, all his days, in very moderate circumstances. ONLY the wise Disposer of all events, for the glory of his own name, and for the revival of true religion in Europe, by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit, could have produced, at the season when most wanted, so able and dauntless a champion, possessed of so much vigor of intellect, of so daring a spirit, and of a temper so truly humble.

Such was the illustrious Luther, when he was called upon by Divine Providence, to enter the lists, alone and without one assured ally, against the hosts of the pretended successor of St. Peter, who was then domineering over the christian world in all his grandeur and plenitude of power.

CHAPTER III.

The Progress of the Controversy concerning Indulgences, till the conclusion of the Conferences between Luther and Cajetan.

TETZEL, alarmed at the publication of Luther's theses, opposed to them a hundred and six propositions, by way of refutation, and directed his compositions to be burnt. The minds of Luther's disciples at Wittemberg, were so much incensed, that they ventured, by way of retaliation, to burn publicly Tetzel's propositions, or theses, with every mark of disapprobation and ignominy. Luther was much grieved at this rash action; and finding himself accused as the instigator, wrote thus to a friend: "I wonder, you could believe, that I was the author of the deed. Think you that I was so destitute of common sense, as to stigmatize in such a manner, a person in so high an office? I know better the rules of ecclesiastical subordination, and have more regard to my own character, both as a monk, and as a theologian, than to act so." There were also persons, who circulated the report that Luther had published his theses at the instigation of the elector Frederic. To show his concern, as to this false surmise, Luther wrote thus to his friend Spalatinus: "I am heartily vexed at the scandalous report which is diffused with such malignity, viz. that in all I do, I am only the ENGINE of our illustrious prince, for the purpose of disgracing the archbishop of Mentz. What do you think I ought to do on the occasion? Shall I open the matter to the elector? I am extremely concerned, that the prince should be suspected on my account, and I cannot bear the thought of being the origin of contention among persons of so great dignity."

Luther, who never did things by halves, continued to preach and to write on the iniquitous practice of selling indulgences, till the end of the year 1517. In the next year, he attended a general assembly of the Augustine monks at Heidelberg, where a providential opportunity was presented to propagate Divine truth, and which he did not neglect. While, therefore, he remained at this place, he wrote some propositions, in which, he opposed the prevailing notions concerning justification, faith, and good works. His capital object in them was to demonstrate the doctrine of justification before God, by faith, and not by our works and deservings. The theses, or positions, which he intended to defend, were according to custom, publicly exposed, and he called upon Bejer, a monk of the Augustine order, to be his respondent. The professors of the university disapproved of the controversy; and therefore it was held in the Augustinian monastery. A large concourse of people attended, and a number of the learned bore a part in the disputation. Among the hearers were Martin Bucer, and John Brentius, men, afterward eminent in the work of reformation. These and other persons, who in process of time became celebrated theologians, admired the acuteness, promptitude, and meekness of Luther; were struck with the truths of the gospel, which were new to their ears, and desired further instruction of him in private.

While the cause of evangelical truth was thus gradually progressing in Germany, two celebrated Romanists, Eckius of Ingolstadt, and Prierias, a Dominican, master of the sacred palace at Rome, wrote against the theses of Luther; who published elaborate answers on all the disputed points. He declared himself filled with grief, while seeing the true doctrine of repentance superseded by indulgences; that he was unwillingly drawn into the contest; that being defamed as an enemy of the pope, he felt himself constrained to defend his own character.

While the literary contest was carrying on between Luther and his antagonists, there were those at Rome, who blamed the pope for not interesting himself in the controversy, which, by exciting a spirit of resistance, and producing divisions, daily increased in magnitude and importance; and which, in its termination, might prove extremely injurious to the authority of the Romish church. Leo X. received these suggestions with indifference and contempt. The avaricious venders of indulgences were, however, not content with the indifference, of the Pope, and loudly vociferated against Luther; and complaints were sent to Rome from every quarter concerning the progress of heresy. Leo was at length roused from his indolence and security, to acts of the most tyrannical violence. He ordered Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days, to answer for himself before certain judges, of whom his antagonist Prierias was appointed one.—Our reformer took the wisest method to protect himself against the impending storm. He instantly sent an account of the pope's citation to his friend Spalatinus, who was then with the elector Frederic at the diet of Augsburg, and in the strongest terms requested, that, through the interposition of the prince, his cause might be heard in Germany and not at Rome. Frederic the Wise understood the arts and practice of the court of Rome, and was convinced of the propriety, and even of the necessity of seconding Luther's wishes. The Roman pontiff, through the importunity of Frederic, at last consented, that cardinal Cajetan, who was then his legate at Augsburg, should take cognizance of the matter, with directions, that if the delinquent showed proper marks of penitence and submission, he should be kindly received again into the bosom of the church; but if he refused to appear before his appointed judge, the legate was commissioned then to denounce publicly, against him and his adherents, all the thunders and anathemas of papal indignation.

Leo X., to secure the concurrence of the elector of Saxony, in his designs to crush Luther, wrote him a polite, affectionate and artful letter, stating the measures he had been compelled to adopt, through the disobedience of an Augustine monk, whose very order and profession should have perpetually reminded him of the duties of humility and obsequiousness. In this, Leo informed the elector, he had ordered Luther to be called upon to answer for himself, and that he had given directions to Cajetan his legate to this intent. And he concluded his letter with a strong exhortation and injunction, that the elector, in virtue of the holy obedience which he owed to the Roman church, should contribute his utmost to secure the person of Luther, and deliver him up to the power of the holy see: he declared, however, at the same time, that if he was found innocent, he should be dismissed in peace and in favor; and even, if he was guilty, should experience clemency upon his repentance.

In this letter, the pope gave no intimations that within 16 days, after Luther was cited to appear at Rome within 60 days, the bishop of Arcoli, the auditor of the apostolic chamber, had proceeded against, adjudged and condemned him as an incorrigible heretic.

From this letter, Frederic learnt the determinations of Leo and his advisers concerning Luther. Nothing short of an utter renunciation of his opposition to the corruptions and abominations of the Roman domination, and a full recantation of his sentiments relative to the great truths of God's word, could effect his reconciliation with the church. Destruction was menaced if he adhered steadfastly to his faith.

Frederic, to provide for the safety of his favorite, gave him letters of recommendation to the senate and principal inhabitants of Augsburg; who, on his arrival, exhorted him not to appear before the cardinal, till a promise of safe conduct from the emperor, should be obtained. Through the importunate request of these same persons, this was granted; and after three days the emperor's council announced to the cardinal, that the public faith was pledged to Luther, and therefore he must take no violent steps against him. The cardinal answered, "It is very well; nevertheless I shall do my duty."

Luther appeared before the cardinal, and was courteously received. But, at the same time, he was required to retract his errors, to avoid them in future, and to abstain from every thing, which might disturb the peace of the church. The heaviest charge brought against him was, he had transgressed the bull of Clement VI. which had defined the nature and extent of indulgences. Luther urged that the holy scriptures, which he could bring in support of his own doctrines, had abundantly more weight with him than a pontifical bull, which in fact proved nothing, but merely recited the opinion of Thomas Aquinas. Cajetan, in answer, exalted the authority of the pope above all councils, above the church, and even above the scriptures themselves. Luther owned he might have erred, but thought it reasonable that his errors should be pointed out on scriptural grounds, before he should be required to retract. But having found that no progress was made by conversing with the cardinal, all whose fine promises of kind treatment amounted precisely to this, "You must either recant, or suffer punishment;" he wisely determined to commit his answers to writing.

Agreeably to this resolution, he appeared before the cardinal with a notary and witnesses, repeated his protestations of general obedience to the church, and his perfect readiness to recant any error of which he could be convinced. Cajetan replied with so much acrimony that the accused monk had no opportunity of explaining or of vindicating his sentiments. He absolutely refused to dispute with Luther either in public or in private; would not consent that a single word of his own answers should be put down in writing, but continued to press for a recantation.

Staupitius, who had hitherto acted the part of a steady friend of Luther, rose up, and entreated the legate to permit the accused to return his answers, at length, in writing. To which request, he, with great difficulty at last acceded.

At the next conference, Luther exhibited his written explanation and defence, which the cardinal treated with the greatest contempt. He told him he had filled his paper with passages of scripture which were irrelevant, and in general, that his answers were those of a perfect idiot. He condescended, however, to say, he would send them to Rome. Lastly, he ordered Luther to depart, and to come no more into his sight, unless he was disposed to recant.

During this whole conference at Augsburg, Cajetan appears to have been conscious how ill qualified he was to contend with Luther, as a disputant in theological questions. His great anxiety evidently was, how he might best insure obedience to the pontifical mandates. He enquired not whether these were agreeable, or repugnant to scripture, it was sufficient for him to know, they were the mandates of a pope.

The decretal of pope Clement VI., which Cajetan urged with so much heat and positiveness against Luther in the dispute respecting indulgences, maintained, that "one drop of Christ's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity, which was shed in the garden and upon the cross, was left as a legacy to the church; to be A TREASURE FROM WHICH INDULGENCES were to be drawn and administered by the Roman pontiffs. The Augustine monk had, for some time past, been too much enlightened to digest such wild superstitious inventions; and the man, who could call upon him, upon these grounds, to renounce his errors, was not to be reasoned with. Still it required extraordinary courage to deliver in a formal protest against the belief of tenets, which were both established by the highest authority, and also supposed to have been dictated by an infallible judgment.

It was on Friday the 14th of October 1518, that Luther made his last appearance before the pope's legate. A report was spread that, notwithstanding the engagements of a safe conduct, he was to be seized and confined in irons. He remained, however, at Augsburg till the succeeding Monday. On that day, hearing nothing from the cardinal, he wrote to him a most respectful letter, begged pardon for any irreverent or unbecoming language which might have escaped him in the heat and hurry of the debate; and even promised to desist from treating on the subject of indulgences any more, provided his antagonists were enjoined to observe a similar silence. But to retract his sentiments, or give up the truth, he absolutely refused. He said his conscience would not permit him to act in that manner. He acknowledged, that his friends, and especially his vicar-general had taken great pains to make him think humbly, submit his own opinion, and form a right judgment: but, said he, neither the favor, nor the advice, nor the command of any man ought ever to make me do or say what is contrary to my conscience. To this letter he received no answer.

On the next day, he sent another letter to Cajetan, expressed in more spirited language and nearer to his usual strain. "He conceived he had done every thing which became an obedient son of the church.—He had undertaken a long and tedious journey; he was a man of a weak body, and had very little money to spend. He had laid the book, which contained his opinions, at the feet of his holiness the pope; he had appeared before his most reverend father, the cardinal, and he was now waiting to be instructed how far he was right in his opinions, and how far wrong. It could no longer serve any good purpose to spend his time there, and be a burden to his friends. He was really in want of money. Besides, the cardinal had told him, to come no more into his sight, unless he would recant;" and, said Luther, "in my former letter I have distinctly pointed out all the recantation I can possibly make."

Having appealed from the pope's nuncio to the pope himself to be better informed, and having made his appeal before a notary public; to prevent being seized and imprisoned, he quitted Augsburg very early in the morning of the 19th of October, 1518. A friendly senator ordered the gates of the city to be opened, and he mounted a horse which Staupitius had procured for him. He had neither boots nor spurs, nor sword; and was so fatigued with that day's journey, that when he dismounted from his horse, he was unable to stand.

Such was the conclusion of the conferences at Augsburg, in which the firmness and plain dealing of Luther were no less conspicuous than the unreasonable and imperious behavior of the cardinal.

As soon as the events at Augsburg were known at Rome, the pope's legate was blamed exceedingly for his severe and illiberal treatment of Luther, at the very moment, it was said, when he ought to have promised him great riches, a bishopric, or even a cardinal's hat.

In the bitterness of his heart, Cajetan complained to the elector of Saxony, of Luther's insolent and insincere behavior; and even reproached his highness for supporting such a character. He said that he had conversed for many hours privately with Staupitius, and one or two learned friends respecting this business; that his object had been to preserve the dignity of the apostolic see, without disgracing BROTHER MARTIN, and that when he had put matters into such a train, as to have reasonable hopes of success, he had found himself completely deluded. Martin, his several associates, and his vicar-general, had suddenly disappeared. Martin, indeed, had written letters, but he had not retracted one word of the scandalous language he had used. Lastly, Cajetan warned the prince to consider, how much he was bound in honor and conscience, either to send brother Martin bound to Rome, or to banish him from his dominions. As to himself, he said, he had washed his hands of so pestilential a business, but his highness might be assured the cause would go on at Rome. It was too important to be passed over in silence; and he entreated him not to sully the glory of his illustrious house for the sake of a paltry mendicant monk.

Soon after this Staupitius was induced to accept the preferment to an abbacy at Saltsburg, which he enjoyed but a very short time. He died in the year 1524.

CHAPTER II.

The Controversy continued. The attempts of Miltitz and of Eckius. The progress of the Reformation till the conclusion of the Diet of Worms.

THE condition of Luther after his return to Wittemberg, was peculiarly afflictive. He had now to expect the total ruin of his wordly circumstances, the hardships of poverty and exile, or aviolent death from papal vengeance. He was not, however, without hope of the elector's protection, partly from the well known justice and humanity of that prince's character, and partly from the good offices of his secretary Spalatinus. As yet, the interference of Frederic in the ecclesiastical controversy, had not only been firm and discreet, but also as spirited and friendly, as could reasonably be expected, in behalf of one who was considered by the hierarchy a turbulent and abandoned heretic. It still behoved Luther not to be over confident in his expectations of future support.

Every day the contest grew more and more perilous. Luther himself had a single eye to the prosperity of Christ's kingdom; but for the zeal or the perseverance of others, he could not be answerable. He could not wonder if the love of many began to wax cold. His friend Staupitius had already quitted Saxony; and, though the elector had hitherto manfully defended him against the tyrannical proceedings of the court of Rome, it might well be doubted whether the chief motives of this magnanimous conduct, were a regard for the honor of God and the religion of Jesus.

It was an excellent part of Luther's character, that in the most critical and difficult situations, he could commit his cause to the God, whom he served, with firm and entire reliance on HIS WILL; and at the same time be as active and indefatigable in using all prudential means, as if the events depended solely on human exertions. In his present danger and perplexity, he cast his eyes on France, where formerly some opposition had been made to the fulness of papal domination; and where he hoped he might profess and preach divine truth with greater security than in Germany. But Frederic expressing his earnest wish that he would not leave Wittemberg, and declaring, with a calmness and dignity, suitable to his princely character, that he could not expel him from his dominions, without doing much injury to his university, gave assurance that he should not consider him as an heretic till he had been heard and was convicted. By this determination Luther resolved to remain on the spot, where he had for some time, besides his literary and controversial employments, discharged the office of pastor of Wittemberg, as the substitute of the ordinary minister who was then laboring under bodily infirmities.

Luther, desirous of anticipating the papal bull, which he had for some time been daily expecting, renewed his appeal to the pope, or in failure of this, to a general council. Fifteen days after that, Leo issued a bull, confirming the doctrine of indulgences in the most absolute manner. To maintain this iniquitous traffic, without the least correction of its abuses, prevented every attempt which might be made to reconcile Luther to the hierarchy. The providence of God was admirable in thus having barred up his return to the church of Rome, while, as yet, he was far from being convinced of the totally antichristian state of the popedom.

The court of Rome, finding it impossible to stop the proceedings of Luther by mere authority and threatening, had recourse to the arts of negociation; and Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight, of insinuating manners, was the new legate to transact the business. He was commissioned to present to Frederic the golden consecrated ROSE; and if possible, to put an end to all the ecclesiastical dispute which had produced the rupture between Luther and the Roman see. Frederic had formerly solicited the favor of the ROSE with much earnestness; but on this occasion, he is said to have received it with a cool and almost contemptuous politeness; and in no wise could he be induced to change his measures respecting his favorite professor of Wittemberg.

Miltitz was foiled in his purposes, and repaired to Leipsic; there, having found Tetzel, he twice rebuked him with the greatest severity before his own provincial, on account of his iniquitous practices in the business of indulgences. By doing this he sought to gratify the advocates for reformation, and to shelter the Roman pontiff from censure. The new legate, having had several fruitless conferences with Luther, as to the essential points of controversy, the electors of Saxony and of Treves, agreed to defer the complete examination of the matters in dispute to the first German Diet of the new emperor Charles V; and that, in the mean time, Luther should write a submissive letter to the pope. To this our reformer readily consented, for he was by no means disposed to break with the pontiff; and it is not improbable he would have continued an obedient subject to the Roman see, all his days, if he might have been permitted, without molestation, to discharge the office of a faithful pastor of Christ.

While Miltitz was attempting to negociate a reconciliation in Germany, Tetzel, the wretched sub-agent of Albert, whose scandalous conduct had so much disgraced his employers, met with the reward, which frequently awaits the ministers of iniquity. He found himself deserted by all the world. Miltitz, in particular, had treated him so roughly, that this daring and boisterous instrument of papal avarice and extortion actually fell sick, wasted away, and at last died of a broken heart.

Popery was not a religion which betrayed only occasional defects and errors. It had long been growing into a SYSTEM of corruption; all the parts of which were thoroughly connected with each other, and conspired together to deceive, defraud, and domineer over mankind. The members of the system sympathized with their head in a remarkable manner: they saw their very existence dependent on its safety, and flew to its defence on the slightest appearance of danger. Eckius of Ingolstadt, the avowed adversary of Luther, a man of brilliant talents, and ambitious to exhibit his theological skill, was not inactive. He challenged Carolstadt, a doctor of divinity, arch-deacon of Wittemberg, and colleague and adherent of Luther, and even Luther himself, to try their strength with him in a contest on the points in dispute. The challenge was accepted; and George, duke of Saxony, uncle of the elector, offered the combatants the city of Leipsic, as the scene of debate, with an engagement for their security and a promise of every convenience. He was himself a strenuous Roman catholic, and expected great glory would accrue to the papal cause from the well known abilities and attainments of Eckius. Luther obtained leave to be present as a spectator, but was expressly denied the grant of a safe conduct if he attempted to appear in the character of a disputant. The assembly was splendid, the expectations of mankind were strongly fixed; and it was vainly imagined that some decision would be made concerning the objects of contention.

Eckius delivered what he had to say with great animation, and is allowed to have far exceeded Carolstadt in energetic exertions of voice and action. So long as an appeal to books and written documents was admitted, Carolstadt defended himself with a rich variety of apt and excellent quotations; but Eckius having made a proposal, that all books should be laid aside, and the dispute go on without them; the multitude gave a shout of approbation; and Eckius, who had the better memory and a greater flow of words, then supported his side of the question in a more plausible manner, than his opponent.

This disputation continued for six days, during which time, the superior eloquence and acuteness of Eckius seem to have afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of the reformation. Flushed with success, and thirsting for glory, this champion of the papal system at length came to Luther at his lodgings, and with an air of confidence said, "I understand you will not dispute with me in public." "How can I dispute with you," said Luther, "when the duke George refuses me my request of a safe conduct?" Eckius replied, "If I am not to combat you, I wil spend no more time on Carolstadt. It was on YOUR account that I came here. Suppose I could obtain the public faith for your safety, would you then meet me and try your strength?" Luther consented; and very soon after he had the duke's leave to take Carolstadt's place in the public debate.

This lasted for ten days, with uncommon ardor and without intermission. Among the articles of controversy were the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, the nature of repentance and remission of sins, and particularly the foundation of the supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. It was in this last article of controversy, that Eckius placed his chief strength and expectation of victory.

During this debate Eckius was so much struck with the reasonings of Luther, and especially with the neat and well digested order in which his materials were arranged, that he was compelled to acknowledge, before a splendid audience, the qualifications and attainments of his able opponent. He even besought their illustrious and magnificent mightinesses to pardon him, who was so much occupied with other concerns, if he should not be able to produce such a mass of accurate testimonies as the learned doctor had laid before them. He came to Leipsic, he said, not to write books, but to dispute.

The Roman domination now saw clearly that the man, who had proceeded to such extremities, was not to be managed by mild and gentle measures, nor to be gained over by bribes and flatteries: and now judged him to be an enemy of what they termed the holy church, and that he merited all that they could inflict, their utmost fury and indignation.

But God was gradually preparing the mind of the Saxon reformer to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free. That the reader may see how this was effected, let him listen to Luther's own statement of the matter: "However blameless a life I might lead as a monk, I experienced a most unquiet conscience; I perceived myself a sinner before God; I saw that I could do nothing to appease him, and I hated the idea of a just God that punishes sinners. I was well versed in all St. Paul's writings; and, in particular, I had a most wonderful desire to understand the epistle to the Romans. But I was puzzled with the expression, "THEREIN is the righteousness of God revealed." My heart rose against God with a sort of silent blasphemy: at least in secret I said with great murmur and indignation, was it not enough that wretched man, already eternally ruined by the curse of original depravity, should be oppressed with every species of misery through the condemning power of the commandment, but that even through the GOSPEL, God should threaten us with his anger and justice, and add affliction to affliction? Thus I raged with a troubled conscience. Over and over I turned the above mentioned passage to the Romans most importunately. My thirst to know the apostle's meaning was insatiable.

"At length, while I was meditating day and night on the words, and their connexion with what immediately follows, namely, "the just shall live by faith," it pleased God to have pity upon me, to open mine eyes, and to show me that the righteousness of God, which is here said in the gospel to be REVEALED from faith to faith, relates to the method by which God, in his mercy, justifies a sinner through faith, agreeably to what is written, "the just shall live by faith." Hence I felt myself a new man, and all the scriptures appeared to have a knew face. I ran quickly through them as my memory enabled me; I collected together the leading terms; and I observed, in their meaning, a strict analogy, according to my new views. Thus, in many instances, the WORK of God means that which he works in us; and the power, and wisdom of God, mean the power and wisdom, which his Spirit operates in the minds of the faithful; and in the same manner are to be understood the PATIENCE, the SALVATION, the GLORY of God.

The expression, "RIGHTEOUSNESS of God," now became as sweet to my mind as it had been hateful before; and this very passage of St. Paul proved to me the entrance into Paradise."

This interesting account, of the steps by which Luther was led to evangelical light in the important doctrine of justification by faith, evidently refers to what passed in his mind about the time of the celebrated disputation at Leipsic; and for that reason it was introduced in this place.

After this public disputation, Luther carefully reviewed all his positions which had been the subject of debate with Eckius, and published them with concise explanations, and with arguments in their support, consisting of appeals to scripture and ecclesiastical history.

The publications of Luther were circulated throughout Germany, and read with the greatest avidity by all ranks and orders. Eckius and other advocates of the Roman catholic cause, answered the heretic with great heat and indignation. Luther replied with the promptitude and precision, and also with the zeal and confidence of a man, who was perfectly master of the arguments on both sides of the questions in dispute, who felt deeply interested in the establishment of truth, and had thoroughly examined the foundations of his opposition to the prevailing corruption. By these means the discussions at Leipsic were detailed with minuteness, and were continued with spirit; they every where became topics of common conversation: and, as Luther constantly appealed to plain sense, and the written word of God, the scholastic subtilties o Eckius lost their weight and reputation among the people. The advantages to the cause of the reformation, which in this way resulted from the public contest at Leipsic, were great and most important.

This memorable controversy took place in the yea 1519. The elector of Saxony, who was the only prince that publicly favored the reformation, foun both his knowledge of the scriptures, and his kindness toward Luther, much increased by what he read, and heard from others relative to the points debated in this controversy. Even, before Luther had dared to withstand and expose the corrupt practices of the Roman see, the mind of Frederic had been much exercised about Divine things. With much diligence and constant prayer he had read the word of God, and was extremely displeased with the usual modes of interpreting it. And when, through the grace of God, and the instrumentality of Luther, some rays of evangelical light began to break forth, he opened himself explicitly to his chaplain, Spalatinus, to this effect: "I have always indulged a secret hope, that in a short time we should be blessed with a purer knowledge of what we ought to believe." Meanwhile he gave attention to practical sermons, and read the scriptures with great delight; especially the four gospels; from which he collected many excellent passages, and so impressed them on his memory, that whenever occasion required, he could readily apply them with great advantage and comfort. He used particularly to insist on that saying of our Lord, "Without me ye can do nothing," more than any other. On this he remarked, "How can it possibly be, that mankind should be perfectly free from all corrupt bias, when Christ himself saith, "without me ye can do nothing?"

Such were the reflections, which the disputation at Leipsic, concerning the necessity of GRACE, and the natural condition of man since the fall of Adam, appear to have produced in the mind of Frederic the WISE. While they imply considerable insight into several of the essential doctrines of christianity, they also throw much light on the religious character of this prince. Frederic had a deep sense of his own weakness and sinfulness, and felt great anxiety that the faith of Christ might be preached among the people in its purity; and this anxiety kept pace with his own progress in practical religion. But still this excellent personage remained in bondage to papal authority and papal superstitions; hence, though his views of the bible were in perfect harmony with those of Luther, and though he further agreed with the reformer, that shameful abuses ought to be corrected, dangerous errors to be exposed, salutary truths propagated, and mankind put into possession of the words of eternal life, he nevertheless continued to feel most disquieting apprehensions, lest, in compassing these important purposes, OFFENCE should be given to the majesty of the Roman pontiffs.

The celebrated Philip Melancthon, professor of Greek in the university of Wittemberg, who is always numbered among the most illustrious and respectable instruments of the reformation, was now only about 23 years of age. Already he had favored Luther's intentions of teaching pure christianity and of delivering it from the reigning darkness and superstition. Being present at the conferences at Leipsic, and being possessed of the rare faculty of discerning truth in its most intricate connexions and combinations, while listening to the sophistry of Eckius, his mind became better acquainted than before, with the argumentative resources of the Romish religion; at the same time the solid reasonings of Luther, supported by constant appeals to the scriptures, convinced his mind of the soundness of the principles of his industrious and persecuted friend, and he then became determined to embark in the cause of religious liberty, with zeal and fidelity. From this period, Melancthon applied himself most intensely to the interpretation of the scriptures, and the defence of pure christian doctrine; and he is justly esteemed by protestants to have been, under divine Providence, the most powerful coadjutor of the Saxon reformer. His mild and peaceable temper, his aversion to schismatic contention, his reputation for piety and knowledge; and above all, his happy art of exposing error and maintaining truth in the most perspicuous language, all these endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the revival of the religion of Christ. Little did Eckius imagine, that the public dispution, in which he had foreseen nothing but victory and exultation, and the downfall of Lutheranism, would give rise to another theological champion, who should contend for christian truth and liberty with the spirit of a primitive apostle.

Thus, the pious reader may see, that, in the event and consequences of the ecclesiastical conflict between the Romish and Protestant advocates, he has much cause to adore the wisdom and goodness of that Being, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and also amidst the greatest vauntings and selfsufficient boastings of those who are opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus, that he may still trust confidently in God, and humbly say with the royal songster of Israel, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

Luther, conscious of the justness of the cause in which he had engaged, and seeing the pope and his adherents determined to crush the recent reformation, wrote to the new emperor Charles V. imploring in modest terms, his assistance and protection. In this he assures the emperor that nothing was nearer his own heart than that he might be permitted to discharge his duty quietly in his own sphere. The violent and deceitful practices of others had compelled him to appear in public, but the very best men living, as well as his own conscience, would witness, that his sole object was, the propagation of evangelical truth, in opposition to the superstitions of human tradition. "For this cause," continues he, "during almost three years, I have been persecuted in every way that my enemies could invent. In vain have I proposed terms of peace; in vain have I offered to be silent; in vain have I begged for information and correction of my errors. After having tried all methods without success, I have judged it advisable to follow the example of Athanasius, in applying to your imperial majesty, if so be, it may please God, in that way, to protect his own cause. I humbly, therefore, beseech your serene majesty, that as you bear the sword for the praise of the good and the punishment of the bad, you would deign to take under the shadow of your wings the cause of truth; and as to myself, I crave your support not one moment longer than while I shall appear to have reason on my side. Abandon me the instant I am found impious or heretical. All I beg is, that my doctrines, whether true or false, may not be condemned unheard and without examination. If your most sacred majesty, by your interposition, should prevent the exercise of tyrannical power, such a conduct would be worthy of your royal and imperial throne, would adorn your government, and consecrate to posterity the age in which you live."

Luther was not insensible of the measures which Eckius was pursuing to effect, if possible, his destruction, and was not remiss in using means for his own preservation. It was not, however, till the year 1520, that Leo X. fulminated that damnatory bull against Luther, which proved fatal to the established hierarchy. In this, all persons were forbidden to read his writings, upon pain of excommunication; such as had them in their custody were commanded to burn them, and he himself, if he did not, within 60 days, send or bring his retractation to Rome, was pronounced an obstinate heretic, was excommunicated, and delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh; and all secular princes were required, under pain of incurring the same censures, and of forfeiting all their dignities, to seize his person, that he might be punished as his crimes deserved.

How little Luther was intimidated or disconcerted by this bull we learn from one of his letters written to his friend Spalatinus soon after its promulgation. "At length" he says "the Roman bull is come; and Eckius is the bearer of it. I treat it with contempt. I consider it in all respects a machination of Eckius, and I attack it as impious and false. You see that the express doctrines of Christ himself are here condemned; no cause assigned why I should be deemed a heretic; and lastly, I am called, not to a hearing, but to a retraction. I shall, however, as yet, not seem to know that it is a papal bull, but treat it as a fiction and forgery. Oh! how I wish that the emperor

Charles V. would act like a man; and in behalf of Christ, oppose the emissaries of Satan. On my own account I have no fear. Let the will of the Lord be done. Neither do I see what steps the prince should take; perhaps a silent connivance is his truest policy. Every where, even at Leipsic, I understand, that both the bull and Eckius are extremely despised; so that I almost expect it will, of itself, come to nothing, if we ourselves do not procure it importance, by discovering too great anxiety. I send you a true copy of the bull, that you may see what these Romans are. If they prevail, there is an end of the church, and of the faith of the gospel. From the bottom of my heart I rejoice that I suffer this persecution in the best of causes; though I am not worthy to undergo tribulation in so holy a conflict. I feel myself now more at liberty, being assured that the popedom is antichristian, and the seat of satan. My only prayer is, that God may preserve his own people from the impious seductions of Romish adherents. Erasmus writes, that the emperors' court overflows with beggars and dependants, all disposed to promote tyrannical principles, so that there is no hope in Charles. No wonder! Trust not in princes, or in any child of man, for there is no help in them."

The first defensive step, which the intrepid reformer took, after having received the pope's bull, was to appeal from the sentence of the Roman pontiff, to the superior authority of a general council. In this he appeals from his holiness, "as a rash, iniquitous, tyrannical judge; as a hardened heretic, and apostate; as an enemy, Antichrist, and opposer of the sacred scriptures; and as a proud and blasphemous despiser of the sacred church of God, and of all legal councils."

Soon after this appeal, he published, in answer to the bull, two small tracts, in which he exposed, with great spirit, the injustice, arrogance, and despotism of the Roman court. The first is entitled, Martin Luther against the execrable bull of Antichrist. In this he affects to entertain some suspicion that the bull itself is a wicked forgery of Eckius and his party.—

"How," said he, "is it possible that so wild and unchristian a composition should be the production of the pontiff and his learned cardinals? If indeed the fact should turn out to be so, if indeed the bishop of Rome should be actually found to rage against him in the manner which the terms of the bull implied, he congratulated himself for being called to suffer in so righteous a cause. He could have but one wish, namely, never more to be reconciled to so impious an Antichrist, never more to desire communication with him; but to surrender his life, if it so pleased God, with grateful joy and thanksgiving. On account of his sins he said, he merited other treatment than so distingushed and honorable a martyrdom. The author of this damnatory bull, continued he, does not understand Luther. Luther has been long used to controversies; and is not to be frightened by vain threatenings. He knows the difference between an unsatisfactory, unmeaning paper, and the powerful written word of God."

Luther then calls on all christian kings and princes, and particularly on the emperor Charles V. and puts them in mind of their engagements at their baptism. He addresses bishops, learned doctors, and all who confess the name of Christ, and entreats them to come forward and defend the distressed church of God from the machinations of the papists. Lastly, with the greatest seriousness he admonishes the pope himself, and his cardinals, no longer to persevere in their madness, no longer to act the undoubted part of the Antichrist of the scriptures.

Our reformer calls his second tract, a defence of the articles of Martin Luther, which are condemned by the bull of Leo X. Here, in support of the authority of scripture, he says; "The sacred writings are not to be understood, but by that Spirit, with which they were written; which Spirit is never felt to be more powerful and energetic than when HE attends the serious perusal of the writings which HE HIMSELF dictated! Setting aside an implicit dependence on all human writings, let us strenuously adhere to the scriptures alone. The primitiʌe church acted thus; she must have acted so; for she had seen no writings of the fathers. The scripture is its own interpreter, trying, judging, and illustrating all things. If it be not so, why do Augustine and other holy fathers appeal to the scripture as the first principles of truth, and confirm their own assertions by its authority? Why do we perversely interpret the scriptures, not by themselves, but by human glosses, contrary to the example of all fathers? If these fashionable modes of exposition be right, we had better at once admit, that the writings of the fathers themselves are more perspicuous than the scriptures. Again: if this be the case, the fathers acted very absurdly, when they undertook to prove their own writings by the authority of the scriptures; and it will follow, that we ought to pay more regard to expositors than to the word of God. The apostles proved their assertions by the scriptures; yet they surely had more right to plead their own authority than any of the fathers had. Let the fathers be allowed to have been holy men; still, they were only men, and men inferior to apostles and prophets: let them, however, be an example to us; and, as they in their time labored in the word of God, so let us in our days do the same. There is one vineyard, and there are laborers employed at different hours. It is enough that we have learned from the fathers the duty of studying and diligently laboring in the scriptures; it is not necessary that we should approve of all their works. There are seasons when the diligence of many does not afford what the critical opportunity gives to one, provided that opportunity be connected with the incomprehensible energy of the Holy Spirit."

The time had now come, when the majesty of the divine word began to be revered as decisive in all cases of doubt. The light of the apostolic age began to beam anew on the nations of Europe, and to be productive of the most salutary consequences to millions of such individuals, as have thought or may think, the care of an immortal soul to be a weighty and a rational employment.

Truly, there was an asperity in Luther's style of writing which threw a shade over all his virtues. Let us hear him apologize for this to his friend Spalatinus, "I own I am more vehement than I ought to be: I have to do with men who blaspheme evangelical truth; with wolves; with those who condemn me unheard, without admonishing, without instructing me; and who utter the most atrocious slanders against myself and the word of God; even the most senseless spirit might be moved to resistance by their unreasonable conduct; much more I, who am choleric by nature; am possessed of very irritable feeling, and of a temper easily apt to exceed the bounds of moderation. I cannot, however, but be surprised, whence this novel taste arose, to call every thing spoken against an adversary, abusive language. What think ye of Christ? Was he a reviler, when he calls the Jews an adulterous and perverse generation, a progeny of vipers, hypocrites, the children of the devil? What think ye of Paul, who calls the enemies of the gospel, dogs, and seducers; who in the 13th chapter of the Acts inveighs against a false prophet in this manner, "O full of subtilty and malice, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness? Why does not Paul gently sooth the impostor, rather than thunder at this rate? A mind conscious of truth cannot with easy indifference endure the obstinate enemies of truth. I see that all persons demand of me moderation, and especially those of my adversaries who least of all exhibit it. If I am too warm, I am yet frank and open; in which point I think that I excel those, who always act with artifice and guile."

In another letter to the same friend, he expresses himself thus; "Popery will never be reformed one tittle by writings, that give no offence, that make no attack; in a word, that do not bite. For the pontiffs consider these very gentle and civil admonitions as a species of servile cringing; they are content to be feared, and they persevere in their wicked courses, as though they had an absolute right to remain incorrigible.

It cannot be denied that, notwithstanding the heat and impetuosity, natural to Luther, he always considered well what he wrote, and that, in all his writings, he displayed the man of piety, genius and erudition.

When Luther, by his publications, had opened men's eyes to the impiety and injustice of the sentence of the Roman court, he proceeded to perform one of the boldest actions recorded in history. Convinced that his appeal to a general council would be disregarded by the pope and his cardinals, and foreseeing, that, if he did not soon recant his heresies, the thunder of excommunication would be levelled against the man who had so long been the object of ecclesiastical indignation, he determined to separate himself from the communion of the church of Rome; and as Leo, in his bull, had appointed Luther's books to be burnt, he, by way of retaliation, erected an immense pile of wood without the walls of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of the professors and students of the university, and a vast multitude of spectators, committed to the flames, the papal bull of his excommunication, together with the volumes of the decretals and canon law which related to the pontifical jurisdiction.—By this act, he publicly withdrew from the Romish church, and manifested that he considered it wholly corrupt and impious, and himself to be no longer a subject of the pontiff. By this act too he manifested his determination to rest his own defence on the vigor and perseverance of his attacks, and to aim at nothing short of victory in his contest with the Romish hierarchy. This bold and intrepid step both encouraged his friends and astonished his enemies. The die was now cast: and his life was to be saved, not by a vain assertion that he was no longer a subject of the pope, but by putting it out of the power of Antichrist to do him harm.

Luther, to convince mankind that the measure he had just executed, with so much firmness and intrepidity was not a hasty thought, or the ebullition of a sudden gust of passion, immediately selected 30 articles from the code of papal laws, as a specimen of the iniquitous contents of the books which he had just consumed; upon which he wrote concise and pointed remarks, then printed the whole, and circulated the same in a little tract among the people, calling upon them in the most animated strains to exercise their own judgments in matters of such vast importance.—"Let no man's good sense," said he, "be so far seduced as to reverence the volumes which I have burnt, on account of their great antiquity or their high titles. Let every one first hear and see what the pope teaches in his own books, and what abominable, poisonous doctrines, are to be found among the SACRED, SPIRITUAL laws; and then let him freely judge whether I have done right or not in burning such writings."

The two last of the articles selected by Luther were as follow:

"The pope has the power to interpret scripture, and to teach as he pleases: and no person is allowed to interpret in a different way."

"The pope does not derive from the scripture, but the scripture derives from the pope, authority, power, and dignity."

Luther then affirms, that comparing together the different parts of the canon law, its language amounts to no less than this, "That the pope is God on earth; above all that is earthly or heavenly, temporal or spiritual; that all things belong to the pope; and, that no one must venture to say, What doest thou?"

"Let these articles," continues he, "suffice for the present. If any papal advocate shall be so wanton as to defend them, I will then not fail to place the picture I have given in a much clearer light. Nothing can be easier to me, than to produce many more passages of the same stamp. Were I to proceed with the sad tale I have to tell, it would appear that all which hitherto I have advanced against the popedom was but jest and diversion.

"I undertook this cause at first in the NAME of God; and in the confident hope that the favorable moment was arrived, when of itself, and without further help from me, it would proceed as the cause of God, to certain victory."

Thus the plain good sense and integrity of Luther, did not at this time fail him. He had but to expose to every eye the secrets of the canonical volumes, to shake the papal foundations to their basis. When men read the extravagant propositions which proclaimed the absolute power of the pope, and their own ignominious bondage, their patience startled and began to mutiny against a jurisdiction, which their understandings, as well as Luther's observations and comments, convinced them was founded altogether in injustice and impiety. Hence it was, that many, even of the Roman catholics in Germany, who were zealous for the liberty and independence of their country, were disposed to countenance the reformer in the resistance of the pope's tyrannical bull; and hence also, though Aleander, the pope's nuncio, procured a second bull against him, couched in the most peremptory and definitive terms, it proved almost entirely inefficient. In this, the pope impiously styles himself, *The divinely appointed dispenser of spiritual and temporal punishments.*

The pope was now rapidly losing his influence which he had maintained over the minds of men enthralled in the corruptions of the Romish church.—Though he fulminated bull after bull against Luther, yet nobody appeared to execute the pontifical mandates.

Charles V. now at the HEAD of the empire, from principles of state policy, refused to publish any conclusive edict against Luther, before the discussion of his case at the approaching diet of Worms.

This space of time Luther improved in diligently reconsidering and republishing the doctrines which he had taught, confirming them by new arguments, and rendering his compositions more correct and worthy of approbation. And as Aleander had burnt his books, general curiosity was excited to read his publications with great avidity.

His affairs were now coming fast to a crisis. The eyes of all Europe were fixed on the diet of Worms. That general and astonishing REVOLUTION of sentiment which we have observed, was proceeding with such incredible rapidity, that it now behoved the emperor and the princes to take public cognizance of transactions which could no longer be buried in obscurity. Accordingly Charles V. in his circular letters to the electors and other members of the diet, informed them that he had summoned the assembly o the empire, for the purpose of concerting with them the most proper measures for checking the progress of those new and dangerous opinions, which threatened to disturb the peace of Germany, and to overturn the religion of their ancestors.

After the diet had met, a considerable time was spent in formalities, and in making some general regulations respecting the internal peace of the empire They then proceeded to take into consideration the religious questions and controversies. The papal legates pressed hard for an immediate edict of condemnation against the man who had so long disturbed the peace of the church, and who, for more than six months had been under actual sentence of excommunication, as an incorrigible heretic.

Fruitless pains were taken to compose the differences. Frederic, the friend of Luther, was firm, and acted with cautious circumspection. He insisted, in general, on an equitable hearing in behalf of his subject Luther, and declared that he himself did not pretend to be a judge of theological doctrines and disputes.

The members of the diet withstood the pope's advocates, in their attempts to procure Luther's condemnation without deliberation or inquiry, as inconsistent with justice, and unauthorised by precedent.

The emperor himself admonished the principal nuncio Aleander, that it behoved him to explain to the diet some just and weighty causes of Luther's excommunication; causes too, which should be abstracted from the particular interests of the court of Rome and of the pope, and be evidently connected with the general concerns of religion. At present, he said, an opinion very much prevailed in Germany, that becaus

Doctor Luther had defended the rights and privileges of his countrymen, and declaimed against those odious and arbitrary impositions of which the princes themselves had complained more than once, he was on that very account, disliked and censured at Rome, and that in fact, this was the real foundation of all the harsh and peremptory proceedings against him. So important a point must be cleared up before any further steps could be taken; and an opportunity, therefore, was now afforded the nuncio of proving, to the satisfaction of a full diet, that the pontiff's damnatory edicts against Luther did not originate in partiality and injustice.

Aleander undertook the business: and, producing Luther's writings, from them endeavored to prove that the whole sect of this notorious heretic ought to be abolished. He contended that their principles were equally destructive to both church and state: for they annihilated the spiritual jurisdiction of the HEAD of the church, and even the authority of a general council: and if these are taken away, who would be left to interpret scripture in doubtful cases? There would soon be as many religions, as there are men of fancy and imagination.

This was not the worst. The Saxon heretic subverted the foundations of morality, by denying the very existence of human liberty, and by maintaining that good and evil depended on a fatal and inevitable necessity. Thus a door was opened to the most unbounded licentiousness, when men had at hand this ready defence, or at least this lawful excuse, for every crime they could commit, "OUR FATE DID NOT PERMIT US TO DO OTHERWISE." He then accused Luther of overturning the efficacy of the sacraments, and of inculcating a notion of christian liberty, which gave the reins to vice and wickedness. If you believe this heretic, said he, there is no obligation in vows that have been made with the greatest solemnity. In fine, if his notions prevail, there is an end both of christian liberty and the tranquillity of kingdoms. The whole world will be thrown into confusion; there will be left no ties of obedience, either to princes, or even to God himself; because, according to this novel system, the commandments of the Supreme Being are incompatible with the powers and capacities of his creatures.

Aleander then observed, that in spite of the pontiff's utmost endeavors, for four years past, to free the world from this GREAT EVIL, it was daily spreading itself more and more, and appeared to be desperate and incurable. This detestable heresy ought to be exposed to public execration; and so ought its deceitful, rash, obstinate and furious author. An imperial edict was now, he said, the only remedy. Nor was there any reason to apprehend lest such an edict should be attended with troublesome consequences. It would be made with the consent of the diet, and, no doubt, executed in all the states of the empire. The catholic party, he added, was infinitely the strongest; and it was not likely that those powers, who had had hitherto supported Luther's cause, would incur the emperor's displeasure, by cantinuing to protect him.

The elector of Saxony having foreseen what important political and religious questions were to be agitated at this diet, took care to be at Worms some weeks before the meeting of the general assembly, and from conversations with the emperor and others, soon discovered that mischief was meditated against Luther. His enemies, in general, were contriving to have him brought before the diet, with the design, no doubt, of securing the person of the heretic: and we find that the emperor had once so far acceded to their wishes, as to issue express orders for his appearance. The summons for this purpose was sent to the elector; but this prince refused to concur in that mode of conducting the business, and Charles recalled his summons. All this took place before the middle of January, 1521. In fact, at this moment the cautious Frederic scarcely knew what course to pursue. Perfectly upright and conscientious, he wished for nothing so much as an impartial hearing of the whole cause, and an equitable sentence in consequence; but he had great fears, lest, by calling Luther to Worms, he should entangle him in the dangerous snares of his adversaries; and, moreover, he did not then know, what Luther himself might think of such a proposal. In these circumstances the good sense and good principles of the elector determined him to adhere steadily to two points: 1st, By no means to compel Luther to appear among his adversaries against his own will; 2nd, Not to permit him to stir a step toward Worms without a complete and unequivocal safe conduct, nor to write any letters of passport in his behalf without the express directions of the emperor. In the mean time he caused Luther to be made acquainted with the intentions of his malignant adversaries; and the question to be put to him, What he would do if he should be cited to appear at the diet?

The answer of our intrepid reformer was perfectly in character. He said if he should be called by so high an authority as that of the emperor, he should conclude it to be the Divine will that he should go; and if violence was done to him, as probably might be the case, he would recommend his cause to God, who had saved the three children from the fiery furnace. And if it should not please God to preserve him, his life was but a small thing compared with that of Christ and HIS sufferings. "Though kings and princes," said Luther, "conspired together against the Lord and his Christ, yet, as it is written in the same psalm, blessed are they that put their trust in him. It is not our business to determine whether more or less benefit will accrue to the church from my life or my death; but it is our bounden duty to beseech God that the reign of Charles may not commence with blood, shed in an impious cause. And for my part, as I have often said, I would much rather die by the Romanists alone than that he should be involved in this business. But if I must die not only by pontifical, but also by civil injustice, God's will be done. You have here my resolution. Expect from me any thing rather than flight or retractation. I mean not to flee; much less to retract. So may the Lord Jesus strengthen me! I can do nothing, without scandalizing godliness and hurting the souls of many." This letter was addressed to his friend Spalatinus the elector's secretary.

To the elector himself he writes, as being the subject of this prince, with ceremonious respect; and probably with a suspicion also that his letter might be shown to the emperor. He calls the elector his most illustrious prince and gracious master, and says, "I rejoice from my heart that his imperial majesty is likely to undertake the management of this cause, which indeed is the cause of the christian world in general, and of the whole German empire in particular.

"I have ordered copies of all my writings to be transmitted to your grace; and I now most humbly offer again, as I have repeatedly offered before, to do every thing which it becomes a servant of God and of Christ to do, the moment I shall be informed what my duty is from the clear evidence of the Holy Scriptures.

"I have, therefore, with all submission to entreat your grace to present my humble petition to his imperial majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to grant me a safe conduct, and sufficient security against every kind of violence, as I have reason to be apprehensive on this account; and that he would also appoint learned and good men, unsuspected and well skilled in the knowledge of their bibles, to try this cause; and that for the sake of Almighty God I may be protected from every outrage till I have been indulged with a fair hearing, and have been proved to be an unreasonable, ungodly man, and in short no christian.

"I humbly beg also, that the secular power may so far interfere in my behalf, that my adversaries, the defenders of the Roman see, may be compelled, during this state of the business, to desist from their wicked and malicious attempts against my life, honor, and dignity; and in particular, from publicly burning my writings, though as yet I have never been tried, much less convicted of any crime.

In regard to myself, provided I am but allowed a safe conduct, I shall, in humble obedience to the emperor's summons, most cheerfully appear before the next general diet at Worms; and there, by the help of Almighty God, so conduct myself before just, learned, and impartial judges, that all may be fully convinced that I have done nothing from an inconsiderate, rash, refractory spirit, or with a view to temporal honors and advantages; but that every line I have written, and every doctrine I have taught, has proceeded from a conscientious regard to my oath, and obligations. I own myself unworthy to be styled a doctor in sacred learning; nevertheless it will appear that I have constantly intended to promote the praise and glory of God, the happiness and salvation of the catholic church, the prosperity of all Germany, the overthrow of dangerous abuses and superstitions, and the emancipation of the whole christian world from innumerable, tyrannical, impious, and disgraceful grievances.

That the gracious elector of Saxony, together with his imperial majesty, may deign to turn a christian eye to the present state of religion, burdened and enslaved as it is in so many ways, is the prayer of,

The elector's obedient and suppliant chaplain,
MARTIN LUTHER.

The elector found that secret consultations were daily had at the emperor's apartments for the purpose of ruining Luther, and that an imperial mandate was issued, by which the magistrates were commanded to collect together all the writings of the heretic. And the emperor having, in the mean time, made many attempts to persuade him, that it was his peculiar duty to call his own subject Doctor Luther before the assembly, by his single authority, and also to supply him with the necessary passports; and knowing that no one would be so able as Luther himself, to do away, by his knowledge, eloquence and plain dealing, the malignant sophisms and gross misrepresentations of Aleander, he urged, in full diet, the propriety of proceeding no further in the affairs of Luther, till he himself could be heard in his own cause. To this proposition, almost the whole diet agreed, as what was highly suitable; they alleged, that as Luther's doctrines had spread throughout all Germany, and had excited much thinking, much speculation and design; there now seemed no remedy but to give the author a fair hearing. Their cry was, "Let him have a safe conduct, and let the question be put to him, whether he will retract such articles as militate against the holy christian faith which we have received from our ancestors and preserved until this time."

A passport was what the elector saw to be necessary for Luther's safety; and notwithstanding Aleander did all he could that Luther should be crushed at once by the strong hand of despotic power, and that he should be prevented from appearing at Worms, urging that he was now to be deemed a detestable, excommunicated heretic, to whom no kindness or respectful consideration could be shown, without incurring the manifest displeasure of the pope; Frederic succeeded in procuring for the Saxon reformer, a safe conduct in passing to and from Worms, and from Charles, who wrote with his own hand to the heretic, and calls him, OUR HONORABLE, BELOVED, DEVOUT, DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER, OF THE AUGUSTINE ORDER. He then proceeds to inform him, that the emperor, and the sacred imperial orders, then met in congregation, had determined to examine him respecting certain books which he had published; that they had joined in granting him a safe conduct; and that he must not fail to appear before the diet in twenty one days, reckoning from the sixth of March, the date of the letter. The emperor concludes with repeating his assurance of protection from every injury and violence.

Moreover, the sagacious elector of Saxony had the spirit to demand, and the perseverance to obtain from the emperor, in writing, an express renunciation of the detestable popish tenet, that *good faith is not to be preserved with heretics.*

Luther foresaw, that, if he, after having so often and so long demanded a fair hearing of his cause, and also having received a direct challenge from the papal advocates, should refuse to meet them, before so impartial, and in every respect, unexceptionable a tribunal as the general diet of the empire; his non-appearance would be construed into contempt, timidity, or consciousness of guilt; and therefore, resolved upon a journey to Worms.

He was accompanied by several friends; among whom was Justus Jonas, principal of the collegiate church at Wittemberg. Some others joined them on the road.

Luther was expressly forbidden to preach at any of the towns through which he had to pass. But he, declaring that he had never promised to obey that injunction, and that the word of God ought never to be fettered, preached repeatedly at Erfurth as he went, and at Eisenach as he returned.

The hearts of Luther's best friends began to fail them as the danger approached. At Oppenheim, near Worms, they solicited him in the most vehement manner to venture no further. What favor could he expect from men, who already began to break their word with him? The pope had published a definitive bull against him; and the emperor, in compliance, had ordered all his writings to be seized; and to disgrace him still more, the imperial mandate, as well as the papal bull, were every where put up for the public information. Neither was it forgotten that imperial safe-conduct had not been sufficient to protect John Huss from Romish deceit and cruelty.

At this place he was met by Martin Bucer, who had been sent with several horsemen on the express errand to entreat him to take refuge in the castle of a neighboring knight; here too he received letters from his friend Spalatinus entreating him to proceed no further.

It was under *such* circumstances and to *such* solicitations, that our Saxon hero, with his usual intrepidity, returned that ever memorable answer, "*That though he should be obliged to encounter, at Worms, as many devils as there were tiles upon the houses of that city, this* *would not deter him from his fixed purpose of appearing there: That these fears of his friends could only arise from the suggestions of Satan, who apprehended the approaching ruin of his kingdom by the confession of the truth before such a grand assembly as the diet of Worms.*" The fire and obstinacy that appeared in this answer, seemed to prognosticate much warmth and vehemence in his conduct before the assembly. But it was not so. On that occasion his zeal and ardor were tempered with a laudable moderation and decorous respect both for his civil and ecclesiastical superiors.

It was on the 16th of April 1521, that Luther arrived at Worms. As he stepped from his open vehicle, he said, in the presence of a vast concourse of people, "God will be on my side."

Immense crowds daily flocked to see him; and his apartments were constantly filled with visitors of the highest rank. He was looked on as a prodigy of wisdom, and respected as one born to enlighten the understandings of mankind, and direct their sentiments. The day after his arrival he was conducted to the diet by the marshal of the empire.

On his appearance before that august assembly, he was directed to be silent till questions should be put to him. The emperor's speaker, on the occasion, produced a bundle of books and informed Luther, that, by order of his imperial majesty, he was directed to propose two questions to him. The first was, whether he acknowledged those books which went BY HIS NAME, to be his own; and the second, whether he intended to defend or to retract what was contained in them. Upon this, before any reply could be made, Jerome Schurff, a celebrated doctor of the civil laws, who had come from Wittemberg in the character of Luther's advocate, called out with a loud voice, "You ought to recite the titles of the books." The official then read over the titles in succession. Among which were, Commentaries on the Psalms; a little tract on Good Works; a Commentary on the Lord's Prayer; and other books on christian subjects, in no way related to controversy.

"I shall answer the questions, said Luther, as concisely and as much to the purpose, as I possibly can: 1st. Unless the books have been mutilated or altered by fanciful sciolists, or by the arts of my adversaries, they are certainly mine. Because this question relates to FAITH and the salvation of souls, and because it concerns the word of God, the most important of all subjects in heaven and in earth, and which deservedly requires of us all the most profound reverence, it would be equally rash and dangerous for me to give a sudden answer to such a question; since, without previous deliberation, I might assert less than the subject demands, and more than truth would admit; both which would expose me to condemnation from that sentence of Christ; "Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." For this reason I humbly beseech your imperial majesty to grant me a competent time for consideration, that I may satisfy the inquiry without injuring the word of God, and without endangering my own salvation. After some deliberation, he was allowed to defer his answer till the next day, on the express condition, however, that he should deliver what he had to say, viva voce, and not in writing.

On the following day he was told that he ought not to have petitioned for delay, because he had well known, for a long time, what would be the nature of his examination; and moreover, that every one ought to be able at any moment to give an account of his faith; and much more a doctor of great reputation, like Luther, who had been long exercised in theological discussions. At length, however, said the official, return an answer to the question of the emperor, who has so kindly granted you your request.

Luther then rose, and spoke before the emperor, and the princes, in the German language, to the following effect.

"I stand here in obedience to the commands of his most serene imperial majesty, and the most illustrious princes, and I earnestly entreat that they would deign to listen to this cause with clemency. It will appear, I trust, to be the cause of truth and justice and therefore, if, through ignorance, I should fail t give proper titles to each of the dignified personage who hear me, or if in any other respect I should show myself defective in politeness, they will be pleased t accept my apology with candor. I have not been accustomed to the refinements of the court, but to the cloisters of the monastery, nor of myself have I an thing further to say, than that hitherto I have read lectures and composed books with that simplicity o mind which ONLY regards the glory of God and the instruction of mankind.

"To the first question" continued Luther, "I give a plain and direct answer; and in that I shall persis forever. I did publish those books, and I am responsible for their contents, so far as they are really mine but I do not answer for any alterations that have been made in them, whether by the crafty malice of enemies, or the imprudent officiousness of friends.

"In regard to the second question, I humbly beg your most serene majesty and their highnesses to take especial notice, that my publications are by no means all of the same kind. Some of them treat only of piety, and of the nature of faith, and morals; and these subjects are handled in so evangelical a manner, that my greatest adversaries are compelled to pronounce them innocent, profitable, and worthy to be read by christians. The pope's bull, indeed, though it actually declares some of my books innocent, yet, with a monstrous and cruel *indiscrimination*, *condemns them all*. Now were I to retract *such* writings, I should absolutely stand alone, and condemn those truths in which friends and foes most perfectly agree.

"There is another species of my publications, in which I endeavor to lay open the system of the papal government, and the specific doctrines of the papists: who, in fact, by their corrupt tenets and bad examples, have made havoc of the christian world, both in regard to body and soul. There is no denying this: witness the universal complaints now existing, how the papal laws and tradition of men most miserably entangle, vex and tear to pieces the consciences of the faithful, and also plunder the inhabitants of this famous country in ways most shameful and tyrannical, and scarcely credible, notwithstanding that Germany by her own laws has declared, that any doctrines or decrees of the pope, which are contrary to the gospel, or the sentiments of the fathers, are to be deemed erroneous, and in no degree obligatory. If, therefore, I should revoke what I have written on these subjects, I should not only confirm the wicked, despotical proceedings to which I allude, but also open a door to further abuses of power, that would be still more licentious and insupportable, especially if it were said among the people, that what I had done was confirmed by the authority of his most serene majesty, and a general meeting of the empire.

"Lastly, the defences and replies which I have composed against such individuals as have labored either to establish the Roman tyranny, or to undermine my explanations of the fundamental principles of religion, constitute a third class of my publications. And in these, I freely confess, I have been betrayed into an asperity of expression, which neither becomes me as a clergyman, or as a christian: however, I pretend not to set myself up for a saint, neither do I plead for the strictness of my life, but for the doctrines of Christ. But it is not in my power to retract even these writings, as far as the matter contained in them is concerned; lest by such a step I should become the patron of the most arbitrary and impious usurpations, which in consequence would soon gather strength, and spend their fury on the people of God in more violent outrages than ever. Yet, since I am but a man, and therefore fallible in judgment, it would ill become me, in supporting my poor paltry tracts, to go further than my Lord and Master Jesus Christ did in the defence of his own doctrines, who, when he was interrogated concerning them before Annas, and had received a blow from one of the officers, said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" If then our Lord, who was infallible, did, nevertheless, not disdain to listen to any thing tha could be said against his doctrine, even by a person o the lowest condition, how much more ought such a contemptible being as I, who am all imperfection to be ready to attend to whatever arguments can be brought in the way of objection to my positions? I therefore entreat your majesty, and the members o this illustrious assembly, to produce evidence agains me, and however high, or however low, be the rank o the person who shall be able, from the sacred scriptures, to convict me of error, I will instantly retract and be the first to throw the book into the fire.

"Permit me to suggest, for the consideration of us all, that as Almighty God is wonderful and terrible in council, surely it behoves this august assembly to examine with special care, whether the object whicl my enemies so ardently long to compass, does not in fact amount to a condemnation of THE DIVINE WORD and whether such a measure, adopted by the first German diet of the new emperor, might not lead to a dreadful deluge of evils. Under the protection of Goc there is reason to augur well of this excellent young prince; but take care that you do not render the prospect of his government unfavorable and inauspicious.

"By a variety of instances from holy writ, and particularly by the cases of Pharaoh, the king of Babylon, and of the kings of Israel, I could prove this important point; viz. that men have ruined themselves a the very moment when they imagined they had settlec and established their kingdoms in the most pruden manner. The ruling principle should be the *fear o God*. He it is who taketh the wise in their craftiness and removeth the mountains and they know not, an overturneth them in his anger.

"In saying these things I mean not to insinuate, tha the great personages, who condescend to hear me stand in need of my instructions or admonitions; no— but there was a debt which I owed to my nativ country, and it was my duty to discharge it. Th reasons which I have now alleged, will, I trust, be ap proved by your serene majesty and the princes: and humbly beg that you will disappoint my enemies in their unjust attempts to render me odious and suspected. I have done."

As soon as Luther had finished his speech, which was delivered in the German language, he was ordered to say the same things in Latin; after having recovered himself he did this with prodigious animation, and to the very great satisfaction of his friends, especially the elector of Saxony. His adversaries acknowledge that he spoke for two hours with the applause of one half of the assembly: until John Eckius, the Emperor's speaker, having lost almost all patience, before Luther had well concluded, cried out, in much heat and passion, that he had not answered to the point; that he was not called to give an account of his doctrines; that these had already been condemned in former councils, whose decisions were not now to be questioned: that he was required to say, simply and clearly whether he would or would not retract his opinions.

"My answer," said Luther instantly, "shall be direct and plain. I cannot think myself bound to believe either the pope or his councils; for it is very clear, not only that they have often erred, but often contradicted themselves. Therefore, unless I am convinced by scripture, or clear reasons, my belief is so confirmed by the scriptural passages I have produced, and my conscience so determined to abide by the word of God, that I neither can nor will retract any thing; for it is neither safe nor innocent to act against a man's conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me. Amen."

After the diet had taken Luther's speech into consideration, their speaker told him, that he had not answered with the modesty that became his character and situation; that if he had recanted those books which contained the main part of his errors, he would have suffered no persecution for the rest; that for him, who had revived the errors condemned at Constance, to require a refutation and conviction from scripture, was a wild proposal of a man scarcely in his senses:

that upon such principles nothing would be left certain in the church; and that for these reasons, he was once more asked, whether he intended to defend all he had written as orthodox, or whether he would retract any part as erroneous. Luther persisted in his former answer; and entreated the emperor not to permit him to be compelled to do violence to his conscience, by recanting what he felt himself bound to believe on the authority of the word of God, unless he was proved to be mistaken by evident arguments from scripture. Councils, he repeated, have erred frequently. "You cannot prove that," said Eckius. "I will pledge myself to do it," replied Luther. But night coming on, the diet broke up.

During the whole of this interesting scene, the special partizans of the pope were filled with indignation; and many of the Spanish Roman Catholics followed Luther as he returned home from the tribunal, and showed their enmity by long continued sneers and hisses.

On the next day, the emperor directed a schedule, written with his own hand, to be read to the princes in full congregation. The purport was this; "His ancestors had always respected the Roman church which Luther had now opposed. He could not with any propriety depart from their example. He was bound to defend the ancient faith, and support the papal see. And as Martin Luther could not be induced to give up any one of his errors, he was determined to proceed against him as a notorious heretic. Nevertheless he by no means intended to violate the safe conduct which had been granted to him.

This hasty and indiscreet measure, which was partly owing to the juvenile impetuosity and inexperience of Charles, and partly to the incessant solicitation of the papal party, produced murmurs and complaints in the assembly. The Emperor, by having given his opinion first, had broken the established rules of the diet. He ought not to have given his judgment, till all the other states had given theirs. He had prejudged the cause, and precluded the princes and electors from th right of voting freely in the matter before them. Party spirit ran high. Acrimonious papers on both sides of the question were publicly affixed to the walls; and violent and threatening expressions used. The misunderstanding was, however, thus compromised;—Charles, at the instance of the diet, consented, that the heretic should be allowed a few days longer delay, during which time such of the princes, as pleased, might endeavor to persuade him to recant his errors, and if they succeeded, he promised that he himself would take care he should be pardoned by the Roman pontiff.

Incredible pains were now taken by the princes, electors, and deputies of various orders, to shake the resolution of this hero of the reformation. Luther stood firm, thanked the princes for their clemency and good will toward him, and said, "He by no means censured councils in general, but only that part of the proceedings at Constance, in regard to John Huss. If the faith of Christ was truly set forth, and Christ's flock were fed in a real gospel pasture, there would be no need to burden the church with human traditions. He allowed that he ought to obey magistrates; that the precepts for this purpose were to be taken in their plain meaning, and that he had often taught this doctrine in his writings. He was ready to do any thing, provided he was not urged to deny the clear word of God."

The diet having found Luther inflexibly determined to abide by the sole authority of the sacred scriptures, and that no threats, nor exhortations, nor promises availed to make him change his resolution, the emperor sent him a message directing him to leave Worms, "because, notwithstanding the most friendly admonitions and entreaties, he persisted in his contumacy, and would not return into the bosom of the church."

Luther was allowed 21 days to return to Wittemburg; during which time the public faith was pledged for his safety; but he was strictly enjoined not to preach to the people in the course of his journey.

"This is the Lord's will," said Martin, "and blessed be the name of the Lord!" He then, through the official, returned most respectful thanks to the emperor, and the members of the assembly, for their patience in hearing him, and their liberal treatment i general. He said he had wished for nothing but a reform in religion on the plan of the holy scriptures nor did he now request any favor for himself, but t be allowed the free use of the word of God. Le that be only granted, and he was willing to underg every thing without exception, for the sake of his imperial majesty and the imperial orders. He left Worm on the following day, the 26th of April.

After Luther had taken his departure, Charles, un der the pretence of having certain questions of mino importance to propose, requested the members of th diet to remain three or four days longer in the city The most of the Italian and Spanish nobles complie with the request, while many of the German prince and electors, among whom was Frederic of Saxony departed.

This was the time when the final sentence agains Luther, called the EDICT OF WORMS, was passed. I was penned by Aleander with all possible rancor an malice. The first part of this edict states, that it is th duty of the emperor to protect religion and extinguis heresies. The second relates the pains he had take to bring the heretic to repentance. And the third pro ceeds to the condemnation of Martin Luther in th strongest terms. The emperor says, that by the ad vice of the electors, princes, orders, and states of th empire, he had resolved to execute the sentence of th pope, who was the proper guardian of the cathol faith. He declares that Luther must be looked on a excommunicated, and as a notorious heretic ; and h forbid all persons, under the penalty of high treaso to receive, maintain or protect him. He orders, th after the 21 days allowed him, he should be procee ed against in whatever place he might be ; or at leas that he should be seized and kept prisoner till th pleasure of his imperial majesty was known. He d rects the same punishments to be inflicted on all h adherents or favorers; and that all their goods should be confiscated, unless they can prove that they have left his party and received absolution. He forbids all persons to print, sell, buy, or read any of his books, and enjoins the princes and magistrates to cause them to be burnt.

This famous edict was voted on the 25th of May, and signed by the emperor on the morning of the next day, but dated May the 8th. The design of thus antedating the edict was to induce a belief upon the public mind, that it was passed in the full diet, and expressed the general sense of ALL the members, taken before their dissolution.

But the elector of Saxony had foreseen the rising storm, and had contrived a plan of concealing the persecuted hero of the reformation for a season from the fury of all his enemies. Luther did not, however, greatly relish the scheme, and would rather have met the difficulty and danger in an open way, and have trusted the event to God; but as it originated in Frederic's kindness, he thought it only a becoming respect to his prince to acquiesce in his advice. The secret was revealed to him by Spalatinus on the evening before he left Worms. Three or four horsemen, in whom Frederic could confide, disguised themselves in masks, and contrived to meet the persecuted monk near Eisenac on his return home. They played their part well. They rushed out of the wood, secured Luther, as it were by force, and carried him into the castle of Wartburg. This business was managed with so much address and fidelity, that Luther was completely secured from the effects of the impending prosecution. His implacable adversaries missed their blow, and became doubly odious to the Germans, who, as they were unacquainted with the wise precaution of Frederic, imagined their favorite countryman was either imprisoned or perhaps murdered by Roman emissaries.

It has been conjectured that the whole transaction, respecting Luther's concealment, was planned and executed with the knowledge and even the approbation of his imperial majesty.

CHAPTER V.

From the Conclusion of the Diet of Worms, to the Death of the Elector of Saxony.

THE followers of Luther were much disheartened at his sudden disappearance. Various reports were circulated concerning him; and they knew not what to believe. The minds of all, throughout Germany, who feared God, were filled with anxious solicitude for the safety of his person, and their apprehension, of losing such an instructor, in so early a period of his labors, produced the most melancholy and inauspicious forebodings. The alarms and the affectionate feelings of good people who were already in possession of a degree of evangelical light, and in the way to obtain more, were, on this occasion very great.

Luther, at first, found it difficult to endure with patience and resignation his confinement at Wartburg. His diet, now rich and plentiful, supplied, there is reason to believe at the elector's expense, did not well agree with his constitution, long accustomed to the labors and abstinence of the monastery. He complains, that his body was afflicted with the most obstinate and alarming constipations, while his mind grew feeble and unable to resist temptations; that, he became languid and almost lifeless in private prayer, and was addicted to too much eating and drinking, and to lazy practices. Such was the harsh sentence which this extraordinary man was inclined to pass upon himself. It is the peculiar character of a real servant of God to see his own faults in a strong light, and rarely to speak in mitigation of them.

The papists however, never charge Luther with indolence. On the contrary, they allow, that in his solitude, which, after the name of that island to which the apostle John was banished, he frequently called HIS PATMOS, he labored with indefatigable industry, published many new books, confirmed his disciples in their attachment to him, defended his old heresies, and daily invented new ones.

In his confinement, Luther preserved a strong sense of the value of time. A profound veneration for the holy scriptures, with an abhorrence of every species of priestcraft, constantly directed his judgment, invigorated his resolutions, and supported him in his almost incredible labors and trials.

A little book concerning the abuses *of private confession*, was one of his productions in the castle.—This was composed in the German language, and must have been highly offensive to the ecclesiastics in general. "My design in this book," says Luther, "was not to put an end to private confession, but to render the practice of it USEFUL. There was no doing this, without laying open some of those inconveniences which arise from a bad way of managing it. I touched on these things as delicately as possible; and yet my adversaries were up in arms against me on this account; not considering that the whole world is full of stories respecting the scandalous things which take place under the pretence of secret confession; neither do they seem aware, how many facts connected with this subject I have passed over from a principle of christian decency, lest the very mention of them should contaminate the reader's mind. It is too true, that many of the monks urge the people to confess, not from a regard to piety, but for the purpose of enriching themselves. They live in the houses of the opulent, and acquire an ascendant over them by becoming acquainted with their secrets; they contrive to be with them while they are dying; and insinuate themselves into their last wills. Let men only consider what a source of evils, what a snare to consciences, the common practice of confessing has been, and they will not be surprised that I should have ventured to suggest certain amendments in this matter." On the whole, it was the wish of this sound divine, that the church discipline concerning confession might be regulated by the 18th chapter of Matthew, verses 15—20; convinced as he was that the Roman Catholic mode tended neither to increase the faith nor to amend the lives of the people, but rather to instil into their minds a persuasion, that by a private confession of sin, and a consequent submission to penances or to other injunctions of the clergy, the greatest crimes might be expiated, though the commission of them were ever so frequent or notorious. How very different is all this from a true penitential sorrowing and humiliation for sin and a comfortable expectation of pardon, founded on the faithful promises of Jesus Christ!

The Augustine Friars at Wittemburg, were among the first who dared openly to oppose the popish mode of celebrating *private masses.* This news Luther received in his castle with great satisfaction, both as it demonstrated the zeal of his brethren who were engaged in the same cause, and exhibited a very pleasing and important effect of his own labors. He now published a treatise concerning the abrogation of private masses, in which he shewed that the true scriptural idea of the Lord's supper is, that it is not a real sacrifice under the appearance of bread and wine, but a thankful commemoration of the *great oblation* once offered; not a repetition of sacred offerings, which have any intrinsic value in them for the expiation of sin, but a participation of the consecrated elements in obedience to the dying command of our Savior. To place these points in what he conceived to be their true light, Luther took great pains; and his efforts were crowned with much success.

It was not till after much consideration that Luther became fully convinced of the lawfulness of the marriage of all the clergy. The case of the monks, who had voluntarily devoted themselves to a perpetual celibacy, presented the greatest difficulty to his mind The rest of the clergy were prohibited marriage, only by unlawful ecclesiastical ordinances. In his Patmos he wrote on these subjects with that fixed determination, which had been the result of much impartial inquiry and patient thinking. As this work exposed the evils of monastic promises and engagements, with various other abuses of popery connected with them it necessarily gave great offence to a corrupt hierarchy which daily found its authority lessened, in proportion as the wicked devices which supported it were better understood, and more generally detested. The papists, as might be expected, clamored against the reformer's novel doctrines, and represented them as favorable to a life of ease, indulgence, and sensuality. "Priests might marry, monks might leave their cloisters, and the people no longer be afraid of the penal laws of the church." On the contrary, Luther, in arguing with his adversaries, was never content to stand merely on the defensive. He constantly maintained, that the primary objects of papistical solicitude and contention were not an evangelical purity of faith and practice, but rather the efficacy of certain external performances, as fastings, confessions, penances, and masses, contrived for the express purpose of affording false peace to burdened consciences, and keeping out of sight the atoning blood of Jesus, and the scriptural method of justification by faith alone, with the renovation of our fallen nature through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Luther had a most profound reverence for the holy scriptures. It was by his having had his mind illumined by them, that he foresaw the important consequences which must flow from a fair translation of the Bible in the German language ; that nothing would so effectually as this shake the pillars of ecclesiastical despotism ; and that nothing was so likely to spread the knowledge of pure christian doctrine. And it was at Wartburg that he began to apply himself to this great undertaking.

During his solitude in the summer of the year 1521, he not only translated all the New-Testament, but also took great pains to improve his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages, for the purpose of rendering his intended version of the scriptures more complete. "I find," says he, "I have undertaken a work which is above my strength. I shall not touch the Old Testament till I can have the assistance of yourself and my other friends at Wittemberg. If it were possible that I could be with you, and remain undiscovered in a snug chamber, I would come; and there, with your help, would translate the whole from the beginning, that at length there might be a version of the Bible fit for christians to read. This would be a great work, of immense consequence to the public, and worthy of all our labors." This he wrote to Amsdorp the rector of the university of Wittemberg.

Such, during a captivity of more than nine months, were the employments of this active servant of God, who, notwithstanding, accuses himself of doing too little, and of eating too much. Besides the compositions which have been mentioned, he wrote many letters in his castle to his trusty friends and intimates, which very much lay open the unfeigned sentiments of his heart. A strong and pious confidence in God, an unbounded benevolence to the household of faith, and a determination to hazard every thing in the cause of religious truth, strongly mark the spirit of Luther in every thing he says or does. He encourages the faithful, reproves the timid, laments the oppression of the church, and exults in the prospect of her deliverance. With inexpressible tenderness he comforts his desponding friends; while on all occasions, he withstands his most powerful enemies with an unconquerable intrepidity.

During his residence in the castle of Wartburg he suffered his beard and hair to grow, assumed an equestrian sort of dress, and passed for a country gentleman under the name of Yonker George. He sometimes amused himself with the exercise of hunting in company with his keepers; and his observations on that diversion, in a letter to Spalatinus, are curious and interesting.

"Give yourself no concern in regard to my suffering in this exile. It is of no consequence to me, provided I am not burdensome to the people of this house. I would have no one put to inconvenience on my account. I suppose the prince supports me; otherwise I would not stay an hour here, if I were convinced that my wants were supplied at the expense of the master of this family, though I own he furnishes every thing I wish for with the greatest cheerfulness. Lately I spent two days in seeing the painful, yet agreeable amusement of those famous people called hunters and fowlers. We caught two hares, and some miserable young patridges. Laudable employments for men of leisure! For my part theological subjects occupied my thoughts even while I was among the dogs and the nets. And any pleasure, that I might receive from this species of relaxation, was fully balanced by the sentiments of grief and pity excited in my mind by an interpretation which I could not but give to the symbolical scenes at that time under my contemplation. This, thought I, is an exact representation of Satan, who, by his snares and dogs, namely, the corrupt theologians and ecclesiastical rulers, pursues and entangles simple, faithful souls, in the same way that the harmless hares and patridges are taken. To be brief, the similitude was so striking as to affect me exceedingly."

In another letter to the same person, he discovers evident symptoms of impatience.

"For the glory of the word of God, and for the mutual confirmation of myself and others, I would much rather burn on the live coals, than live here alone, half alive, and useless. If I perish, it is God's will; neither will the gospel suffer in any degree. I hope you will succeed me as Elisha did Elijah."

Melancthon, the excellent coadjutor of Luther, though learned, ingenious, unblemished in his manners, and cordially attached to the best of causes, began about this time to exhibit more sensibly than ever the constitutional timidity of his temper. Far superior to all the rest of Luther's adherents in talents and attainments, he was inferior to many of them in courage and fortitude; and on that account unequal to the character of SUPERINTENDANT, which he was now called to sustain. Luther, who loved the man and was well aware of his infirmity, frequently and in the very kindest manner, reproved his desponding spirit, and at the same time encouraged him to be both bold and patient in the cause of the reformation.

He also solicited the elector Frederic, through the intercession of Spalatinus, to provide for the more comfortable support of this learned professor, whose character contributed so much to the reputation of the university of Wittemberg.

During the summer of this year, not only Melancthon, but his brethren, the ruling academicians, were much disheartened, partly on account of the absence of their grand leader, and partly because they experienced not a little embarrassment, from the excessive caution of the elector and his court. They were not allowed the full privilege of publishing any of Luther's writings, nor even of disputing publicly on certain questions, which it was supposed, might give offence to persons of distinction who were much attached to the established religion. Luther, though peculiarly exemplary in the practice of lawful obedience, "to the powers that be," made no scruple to refuse compliance with the will of the civil magistrate, whenever that will, in his judgment, was directly contrary to the commands of God. Accordingly he exhorted his christian friends of the university not to follow the counsels of the court, but to take the lead themselves, as he had done. "We should not," said he, "have had one half the success we have had, if I had taken the advice of Spalatinus." And in about three months after this, he wrote to this last mentioned friend in the warmest terms of expostulation and remonstrance. He tells him, that he was determined to publish what he had written against the archbishop of Mentz, however the prince and his secretary might dislike the measure, and that it was at their peril if they obstructed his design. "The peace and approbation of God, is to be preferred to the peace and approbation of the world. What, though some of our friends have exhibited a turbulent spirit; will the gospel, on account of their irregularity, come to nothing? Was there not even among the apostles, a traitor, Judas? In ALL circumstances we ought to adhere strictly to the simple WORD OF GOD, and not merely when the WORD happens to thrive and be respected among men.

Let those, who please, talk against us. But why are we always to be looking on the dark side of things? why not indulge hopes of better times?"

Evangelical publications, and evangelical preaching, with constant exhortation to study diligently the holy scriptures, were the external means on which Luther always relied for the propagation of christian truth, and the deliverance of the people from popish darkness and slavery. Wise and persevering in the use of these means, he had the consolation to hear more and more of their blessed effects. The Augustinians of Wittemberg left off the celebration of private masses, new preachers of the gospel daily lifted their voices throughout the electorate of Saxony;—and though some persons of the higher ranks, both among the magistrates and the clergy, were intimidated by the imperial edict of Worms, the common people attended to the pure doctrines of salvation. The good seed which was sown under various circumstances, sprung up and bore fruit in almost all parts of Germany.

But amidst the consolation which Luther, in his retreat derived from the accounts which he was continually receiving of the courage and success of his disciples, and the progress of his doctrines, the report of several events reached the castle of Wartburg, which must, in some measure have damped his joy and expectations.

He was so much affected with the news of *certain proceedings* at Wittemberg, that he was determined to run the hazard of making a private excursion to that place, for the purpose of conversing with his friends on subjects which deeply and anxiously interested his thoughts. The exact circumstances of this clandestine visit, are but imperfectly known; and we can do no more than form conjectures respecting the *proceedings* which seem to have given rise to this extraordinary step. Many of the canons of Wittemberg disgraced the nascent reformation, both by an obstinate adherence to the reigning superstitions, and by a shameful profligacy of manners. In the next place, the untractable temper of Carolstadt showed itsel more and more, and gave great concern to Luther.—"I lament," says he, "the behavior of this man. Indeed we have it in our power easily to withstand hi precipitate motions, but then we shall give occasio to the adversary to triumph on account of our interna discords; and not only so, our weaker brethren wil also be much offended."

A passage in one of Luther's letters to Spalatinu may be supposed to throw further light on the subject "I came to Wittemberg, and among the most swee meetings and conversations with my friends, I foun this mixture of wormwood; namely, that several o my letters and little publications had been completel suppressed. They had not even been heard of or see by any one. I leave you to judge whether I have no just cause to be much displeased with this treatment In general, what I have had opportunity of seeing an hearing gives me the highest satisfaction. May the Lord strengthen and support the courage of those who wish well to the cause! In the course of my journey, however, I was not a little vexed to hear variou reports concerning the restless disposition of some o our friends, and I have promised to print, as soon a ever I return to my asylum, a public exhortation applicable to the circumstances. I must explain mysel more particularly at another time. Commend me to our illustrious prince, from whose knowledge I have judged it proper to conceal this little excursion to Wittemberg and back again. You know my reasons. Farewell. I am at this moment in Amsdorff's house, in an apartment with my dear Philip Melancthon."

It was in his Patmos, that Luther first heard of the solemn censure, which the divines of the faculty o Paris passed on his writings, April 15, 1521. The university of Paris was the most ancient, and, at that time, the most respectable of the learned societies o Europe. In 1517, they had ventured to call in question the pope's infallibility; and Luther himself is charged with having repeatedly acknowledged the Parisian doctors to be wise and orthodox theologians;

and with having also promised to submit his cause to their arbitration. It seems therefore extremely probable, that he must have been disappointed, and in some degree chagrined, when he found that the assembly of divines on which he had most relied, adhered, *in the main*, to the old prejudices, and the scholastic divinity, and had actually pronounced his doctrine to be "erroneous both in faith and manners, and proper only to deceive simple people; that it was injurious to all the doctors, and derogatory to the power of the church; openly schismatical, contrary to the sacred scriptures, blasphemous against the Holy Spirit, and pernicious to the christian commonwealth."

It was about this time that Henry VIII. king of England, published in Latin his celebrated answer to Luther's treatise on the Babylonian captivity, and had conferred on him by pope Leo the title of *the defender of the faith.*

Martin Luther was neither to be overawed by the repudiation of the university of Paris, nor by the dignity of the sovereign of England. He soon published his animadversions on both, in as vehement and severe a style, as in the course of his numerous polemics, he had ever used to his meanest antagonist. This treatment prejudiced Henry still more against the new doctrines; but the public admired those fresh instances of the undaunted spirit of the reformer: the controversy drew more attention; and notwithstanding the combined efforts both of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, the Lutheran opinions daily acquired new conquests in every part of Europe.

In the month of December of this same year, at the age of 46, died Leo X., a pontiff renowned for his encouragement of literature and the fine arts. This pope is memorable on account of the diminution which the papal authority received through his ignorance, imprudence, and precipitation. Thousands, in contemplating his conduct, had learnt to despise his pretensions to the sacred character; and as if Leo had been eager to confirm their prejudices, he issued bulls

against heretics, while he himself was dissipating hi
time and health in prodigal and luxurious pleasure
in the company of debauched cardinals, and in pro
moting expensive and licentious spectacles at the theatre.

In the first week of March 1522, Luther left his Pat
mos, and returned to Wittemburg, without the consen
or even the knowledge of Frederic his patron and pro
tector. The active spirit of the reformer ill brooke
his long confinement; and, moreover, the distracte
state of the infant protestant church absolutely requir
ed his presence. Already he had once ventured ou
of his asylum, and made a short visit at Wittemberg
without the privity of the elector; but matters wer
now daily becoming more critical; and as Luther ha
resolved, at the hazard of his life, to resume again hi
character of a public actor in the concerns of religion
he immediately acquainted his prince with the bol
step he had taken, and the motives which compelle
him no longer to remain a concealed spectator o
transactions which oppressed his mind with the mos
painful apprehensions for the credit of the dawnin
reformation.

The excessive and even dangerous zeal of Carol
stadt was one of the afflictive causes which influence
the conduct of Luther on this occasion. Carolstad
was a professor at Wittemberg of considerable learnin
and ability, who had exposed the papal tyranny an
superstition with great spirit, and, in general, deserv
ed well of the protestant cause. His name, though no
specifically mentioned in the damnatory bull agains
Luther, was well known at Rome, and through th
malicious instigation of Eckius, whom he had oppos
ed in the Leipsic disputation, he had been suspende
from all communion with the church. This usefu
colleague of the great reformer, soon discovered, during the absence of his master, a temerity of judgment
and a violence of temper, which absolutely disqualified him for the helm in the present tempestuous conjuncture. Not content with promoting, in a legal an
quiet way, the auspicious beginnings of the reformatio

at Wittemberg, in the gradual omission and rejection of the private mass and other popish superstitions, he headed a multitude of unthinking, impetuous youths, inflamed their minds by popular harangues, and led them on to actions the most extravagant and indefensible. They entered the great church of All Saints, broke in pieces the crucifixes and other images, and threw down the altars. Such indecent and irregular conduct by no means becomes those, who profess themselves the disciples of the Prince of Peace; and though in the midst of his excesses, the sincerity of Carolstadt's endeavors to rectify the abuses of popery, is not to be questioned, one cannot but lament, that the same man, whose sagacity had penetrated the veil of papal delusion in many instances, should in others be distinguished also for a want of plain sense, and ordinary discretion. It may be proper to give a brief detail of the circumstances which led to those outrageous proceedings.

Honest Carolstadt, mistaking the true meaning of Matthew xi. 25, where our Lord says, "I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," rashly concluded that human learning, was useless, if not injurious to the student of the scriptures He frequented the shops of the lowest mechanics, and consulted them about the meaning of the word of inspiration. He would be called no longer by the appellation of doctor, or any other honorable title. He lived in a village, employed himself in rustic occupations, and maintained, that thinking persons stood in no need of learning, but had better labor with their hands. In consequence of his example and conversation, the young academics of Wittemberg left the university, and ceased to pursue their studies; and even the schools of the boys were deserted. Such proceedings were manifestly conducive to the excesses above mentioned, and were in every view extremely hurtful to the cause of the reformation which was happily making rapid advances in many parts of christendom. We have seen that the Augustine Friars of

Wittemberg had begun to abolish the celebration of *private masses*, and that Luther was pleased with the news, and employed his pen against that popish corruption. The elector on the contrary, appears to have been alarmed on the occasion, and to have deputed one of his counsellors to signify to the church and university of Wittemberg, that his highness had been informed of many innovations and alterations in the ecclesiastical usages, which were there daily taking place; and in particular, that the Augustinians had omitted to celebrate the customary masses. Six persons among the canons and the academics were chosen to examine this matter, who, in a written report, not only expressed their approbation in general of what had been done, but boldly and solemnly exhorted the prince to put an end, throughout his whole territory, to the popish profanation of the Lord's supper. "It became him, " they said, "as a christian prince, to act with dignity and spirit in such an affair; and not to regard the name of heretic or of Hussite, which might be applied to them. Whoever faithfully supported the laborious and dangerous cause of the gospel, must expect much abuse and reproach. Jesus Christ required this service from him. He had designed to illuminate with the knowledge of the truth, the mind of the elector of Saxony more than any other of the princes; and his highness would do well to remember, that in the day of judgment God would call him to a severe account for the use of the talents committed to his care."

To this, the elector directed the following answer to be given: "that he wished to conduct himself in every thing like a christian prince, and leave nothing undone which might promote the glory of God, and tend to the better establishment of evangelical truth. But that the alteration proposed appeared to be a matter of great consequence, which called for the mature deliberation of the whole church, and ought not to be precipitately decided by a small number.— If their advice was sound, doubtless it would be followed by others, and he might then begin the change with some prospect of success. That he had yet to learn, when the present mode of celebrating mass was introduced into the church; perhaps several centuries ago; as also when the apostolic usage ceased. That as many churches and monasteries had been founded for the express purpose of saying masses, the *revenues* of the said foundations might not be withheld. Lastly, as they did not seem inclined to take his advice, he owned himself to be only a lay person, and not skilled in scripture, and entreated them, therefore, to consult calmly with their brethren, the rulers of the church and of the university, and so to settle the business, that no tumults or seditions might ensue."

The above mentioned six deputies in their rejoinder adhered to the opinion they had already given, namely, that the abuses of the private masses ought to be abolished, and this, they believed, might be done without tumult or danger; but if not, the evil was so great, that it ought to be removed without any regard to the scandal or defamation which might be the consequence. That though the reformers were but a small part of the church, they had the word of God on their side; and this single consideration was paramount to every other, being an authority to which the angels and all created beings ought to bow.—From the beginning of the world, it had always been found that only a very small part of mankind acknowledged the truth. Did not Christ himself commit the preaching of the gospel to a few weak, despised, unlettered persons? and did not a similar dispensation take place at this day? The true use and nature of the Lord's supper, together with many other points of religion, were most expressly laid down in the gospel; notwithstanding which, the dignified priests, and the wise ones of this world, either from interested motives or complete blindness, continued to oppose the truth, and refused to accede to the most reasonable and pious reformations; they only excepted those whose eyes it had pleased God to open by a heavenly illumination. The ancient colleges and monasteries, they said, even to the time of Augustine and Bernard, were founded, not for the purpose of saying a number of masses and babbling the canonical hours, but for the instruction of the poor. It was to the constitution of the more recent foundations, almost universally, that the present mode of celebrating masses was owing.—Moreover these foundations required a certain number of masses to be said every week by particular persons; and as this was a practice absolutely sinful, the consciences of men ought to be released from such fetters without delay. And even if a certain number of masses were not specified, still the very principle on which the masses were celebrated; namely, that they are good works, or sacrifices, or satisfactions for sin which will therefore appease Almighty God, and be useful to others, and even to the dead; is so contrary to sound doctrine, that they ought to be laid aside. The founders of these ordinances, if they could rise from the dead, would condemn what they themselves had done in this respect, and lament their own credulity, when they saw that these their donations had originated in the avarice of the ecclesiastics. Lastly, it appeared from the history of the church, that even to the time of Cyprian, the ancient custom of communicating in *both kinds* was preserved; and that in Greece and the Eastern churches, the same truly apostolic practice obtained at this day. Therefore, it was not their fault, if on account of certain alterations which had become absolutely necessary, some differences, or even tumults, should arise; these were rather to be laid at the door of the persons, who, for the sake of keeping up their dignity, their income, and their luxurious tables, continued to obstruct the light of truth, and cruelly to wage war against the altars of God. They then added in most explicit terms, that if their ecclesiastic and civil rulers would but permit the sacred word of God to be publicly preached, heard and read, even though they did not assent to the truth, but opposed it with all the arguments they could produce, provided they did not inflict cruel punishments on their adversaries, there would be neither sedition, discord, nor tumult. However, the right christian rule was, neither to regard the madness of the enemy, nor the greatness of the danger. Christ did not hold his tongue, though he foresaw that the preaching of the gospel would certainly be attended with discords, seditions, and the revolution of kingdoms; nor were his apostles more negligent and timorous, or less strenuous in instructing the people, because the wise men in the world, at that time, detested the very name of the gospel, and looked upon it as the firebrand of those disturbances, schisms, and tumults, which raged among the Jews with so much fury at Jerusalem.

Satan, no doubt, would put men in mind of the various dangers to which they might be exposed, in order that he might the more effectually obstruct the progress of that religion, which he so perfectly hates. But as it is well known that such are his devices, they ought not to be much alarmed at these his frightful suggestions, but each of them keep to his post, like good soldiers in the field, and commit the event to God. They must expect desertions, but they should also remember their Lord's words, "Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

A serious, argumentative statement like this, would, doubtless, much affect the tender conscience of the elector of Saxony, but probably did not determine that cautious prince to come to any positive decision respecting the ecclesiastical innovations. Accordingly he appears to have connived at the proceedings of these bold reformers, but by no means to have sanctioned them.

It was precisely in this situation of things, when, for the purpose of silencing calumny and misrepresentation, a discreet and due regard to order was most peculiarly called for, that the violent spirit of Carolstadt broke out into the mischievous excesses above described. Already he had done his utmost to discredit, at Wittemberg, the studies of literature, for the advancement of which, as subservient to the best of causes, Luther and Melancthon had much exerted themselves. He now ventured to administer the sacrament in both kinds to all ranks and orders of persons, under all circumstances and without due enquiry or preparation, or regard to any of the usual ceremonies. The senate and also the university of Wittemberg complained of these things in severe terms to the elector, who, feeling himself unequal to the difficulty, directed his commissioners to interpose, and with the consent of all parties, to effect such regulations, as the circumstances required. These were so favorable to the new system, that Frederic declared his commissioners had gone further than what he intended, and that they must not allege his mandate for what they had done. He said, he did not choose to have their alterations imputed to him; for it was known they were contrary to the commands of the imperial government; and it was also known, that the bishops were about to commence a visitation of his electorate.

In this convention it was ordered; 1st. That all persons who were penitent and wished to be in the favor of God, should be exhorted to partake in the sacrament. 2ndly. The popish notion of the mass being a sacrifice was entirely rejected; and 3dly. Steps were taken for the removal of the images from the great church. These, surely, were very considerable amendments; and it is not to be wondered at, if they should have alarmed a German prince of no grea power, who stood almost alone, who was himself fa from having clear views in religion, and who had to contend with the pope, the emperor, and the neighboring potentates, leagued in opposition to the free progress of the gospel. Nevertheless, the violent and impatient spirit of Carolstadt remained dissatisfied with these triumphs of the truth, and there is too much reason for lamenting that an alloy of pride and ungovernable self-will should have sadly debased the hones christian zeal of this early reformer. He even avowed to Melancthon that he wished to be as great, and as much thought of, as Luther. Melanchton told him that that was the language of pride, envy, and unchristian emulation. But Carolstadt was deaf to admonition. He openly professed not to have the least regard for the authority of any human being. He said, he would stick close to the simple word of God, and that no man could be a christian who found fault with what he did. How deceitful is the human heart, and how inconsistent a creature is fallen man! Carolstadt, with much christian light in his understanding, and abundance of honest zeal in his heart, at the very time he was making pretensions to an uncommon purity of motive and doctrine, and to an extraordinary respect for the scriptures, proceeded from one disorderly act to another, till at length he committed those outrages which gave considerable grounds for complaint to the enemies of the reformation, and made its best friends ashamed of their rash and presumptuous coadjutor.

When the report of these transactions reached Luther in his Patmos, he wrote thus to the elector of Saxony; "There is no reason to be frightened. Rather give praise to God; and rejoice in the certain expectation that all will end well. Things of this kind always happen to those who endeavor to spread the gospel. We must not only expect Annas and Caiphas to rage against us; but even a Judas to appear among the apostles, and Satan himself among the sons of God. Be wise and look deeper than to the external appearance. Other agents, besides those which are merely human, are at work. Do not be afraid, but be prepared for more events of this sort. This is only the beginning of the business: Satan intends to carry matters much farther yet. Believe me in what I now say; I am but a plain simple man; however, I know something of *his* arts. Suffer the world to clamor against us, and to pass their harsh judgments. Be not so much concerned at the falling away of particular christians. Even holy Peter fell; and also others of the apostles. Doubt not but they will in a short time rise again, as surely as Christ himself rose from the dead. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are a this moment peculiarly applicable to our circumstances, namely, " that we should approve ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in imprisonments: in tumults, in labors."

Luther concluded his letter with an earnest request for leave to print and circulate his own writings; and with saying that he intended to be very soon at Wittemberg.

The religious mind of Frederic was deeply affected by these sentiments of Luther; and he immediately commissioned one of his confidential magistrates to relate to him in his asylum the particulars of all the late proceedings at Wittemberg: how the pupils dwindled in number, and were called away by their guardians; how anxious the prince was, and how completely in doubt what course to take. That nothing was so distressing to his mind as seditious tumults; but that the imperial government tied up his hands: and moreover, that the bishops had promised they would themselves preach the gospel, and also appoint proper missionaries for that purpose, and that it was impossible for him to oppose their laudable resolutions. He wished exceedingly to have Luther's advice at this crisis, but exhorted him not to think of coming to Wittemberg. The pope and emperor would insist on his being delivered up to them, which would be the severest stroke that could happen to the elector; yet he did not see how he could prevent it. He had never undertaken, nor had Luther desired him, nor was it indeed in his power to do more, than to procure him a fair hearing. In one point, however, he was absolutely determined, namely, if he could find out what was the Divine will, he would cheerfully bear, suffer, do, or avoid doing, every thing which should appear to be his duty agreeably to that will. In a word, he remembered who said, " My yoke is easy and my burden is light, and he would willingly bear, through the Divine strength and help, the cross that God should lay upon him. The transactions at Wittemberg were most surprising; new sects arose there every day, and it was hard to say which were gaining or which losing ground. The diet were to assemble at Nuremberg in a short time; and it was expected that much would be said and done about Luther's business: he had better therefore be quiet and remain in secret for the present: considerable revolutions were at hand; and if it should happen, that the sacred gospel was obstructed, such a turn in the events would be matter of the greatest grief and mourning to the elector.

The commissioner concluded all he had to say with the most kind, faithful, and affectionate assurances of the prince's friendship for Luther.

Thus, the propagation of pure christianity and the salvation of men's souls appear to have been not only the primary, but the sole objects which determined Luther to leave his Patmos at this critical and dangerous moment. So long as he considered himself in pursuit of *these* "he counted not even his life dear to him."

Another motive was presented which called him to Wittemberg: several persons, who really deserved the name of enthusiasts, had appeared in Saxony; among whom Nicholas Stork, Mark Stubner, Martin Cellary, and Thomas Munzer, have, by their follies, obtained a memorial in history. Stork was a baker at Zwickau, who had selected, from his acquaintance of the same calling, twelve whom he called apostles, and also seventy-two whom he called disciples. The other three, in a tumultuous manner, harangued the populace in the church of St. Catharine of the same town. Nicholas Hansman, the pious pastor of the place, resisted these insane prophets to the best of his power, but could not control their fury. They professed themselves to have divine commission, and pretended to visions and inspiration. Munzer, in particular will be found at the head of a rebellion of the peasants in 1525. At present it will be best to hear Melancthon's account of them in a letter to the elector of Saxony. "Your highness must excuse the liberty I take; the occasion is urgent, and calls exceedingly for your highness' attention. Your highness is aware of the many dangerous dissentions, which have distracted your city of

Zwickau, on the subject of religion. Some persons have been cast into prison there for their seditious innovations. Three of the ringleaders are come hither. Two of them are ignorant mechanics, the third is a man of letters. I have given them a hearing; and it is astonishing what they tell of themselves; namely, that they are positively sent of God to teach; that they have familiar conferences with God; that they can foretel events; and to be brief, that they are on a footing with prophets and apostles. I cannot describe how I am moved by these lofty pretensions. I see strong reasons for not despising the men, for it is clear to me there is something in them more than a mere human spirit; but whether the spirit be of God or not, none, except Martin, can easily judge. Therefore, for the peace and reputation of the church, Martin should, I think, by all means, have an opportunity of examining them, and the rather as they appeal to him."

The elector, who did not consider himself as competent to decide on such cases, enquired particularly into the circumstances of the matter, and called in the advice of some of his most learned counsellors. These could come to no decision. They felt the same doubts which Melancthon had expressed, and were afraid of sinning against God by condemning his choicest servants. Upon which Frederic astonished all his ministers and counsellors then present, by hastily making the following declaration. "This is a most weighty and difficult case; which I, as a layman, do not comprehend. If I rightly understood the matter, so as to see my duty, most certainly I would not knowingly resist the will of Almighty God: no; rather than do that, though God hath given me and my brother a considerable share of power and wealth, I would take my staff, and quit every thing I possess." Such was the integrity and tenderness of conscience of this prince! Many in Saxony at that time seem to have feared God in like manner; and were brought to the light of the gospel. That light was, however, as yet, for the most part dim, and crafty hypocrites knew how to take advantage of the want of discernment in godly souls.

Melancthon now pressed the elector most urgently to call in the assistance of Luther's judgment. "No person," he said, "could manage the business so well; Stork and his associates had raised disputes concerning the baptism of infants, and had appealed to the supernatural revelations they had from God; and that in regard to himself, he was by no means qualified to pronounce sentence in so difficult a cause."

The elector, in pursuance of his cautious and conscientious views, directed Melancthon to avoid disputes with these men; and to use every precaution for preventing such tumultuous proceedings as had happened at Zwickau. "He was himself," he said, no interpreter of the holy scriptures, nor did he know whom he ought to appoint to examine the merits of the pretensions in question; but it was then impossible to recall Luther without imminent danger to the person of that reformer. Luther was his subject, and he had so far supported him that he should not be condemned unheard; but beyond that point he could not go; for he felt it incumbent on himself to obey the emperor, who was his lord and master. With respect to the fanatics, he declared, that if he could see clearly what justice required, he was ready to discharge his duty at every hazard." In this state of doubt and suspense, Frederic employed persons to procure the best information they could; and in the mean time he treated Stubner, who was a man of some learning, with hospitality, and meekly bore his fooleries, till the arrival of Luther, whose wise and manly treatment of the enthusiasts, as we shall soon see, quickly exposed the emptiness of their claims to a divine commission, and demolished all their authority and influence.

This sound divine, having been informed in his Patmos of the extraordinary pretensions of these men, had all along beheld their conduct with a jealous eye; and had answered the inquiries of Melancthon with much discretion. "As you are my superior," said he, "both in discernment and erudition, I cannot commend your timidity in regard to these prophets. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves, we ought not implicitly to believe them; but rather to try the spirits according to St. John's advice. As yet I hear of nothing done or said by them, which exceeds the imitative powers of Satan. It is my particular wish that you would examine whether they can produce any PROOF of having a Divine commission. For God never sent any prophet, who was not either called by proper persons, or authorized by special miracles, no, not even his own Son. Their bare assertion of a divine AFFLATUS, is not a sufficient ground for your receiving them; since God did not even choose to speak to Samuel, but with the sanction of Eli's authority. So much for their pretensions to a public character. In the next place, I would wish you to sift their private spirit, whether they have experienced any internal distress of soul, the attacks of death and hell, and the comforts of the new birth unto righteousness. If you hear nothing from them but smooth, tranquil, and, forsooth, what they call devout, religious contemplations, regard them not; for there is wanting the characteristic of the Son of Man, of the Man of sorrows; there is wanting the cross, the only touchstone of christians, and the sure discerner of spirits. Would you know the place, the time, the manner of divine conferences and communications? Hear the written word, "As a lion will he break all my bones." And, "I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes. My soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto hell." The majesty of the Divine Being speaks not IMMEDIATELY, in a way that man should see HIM: none can see HIM and live. Do you try them therefore carefully, and listen not even to a glorifie Jesus, unless you find he was first crucified."

Thus the motives by which Luther was excited t leave his Patmos are before the reader. While a Borna, on his road to Wittemberg, he wrote to the elector in substance, as follows, "That the account of what had passed at Wittemberg had almost reduced him to a state of despair, that every thing he ha as yet suffered was comparatively mere jests and boy's play. He could not enough lament, or express his disapprobation of those tumultuous proceedings: the gospel was in imminent danger of being disgraced from this cause. That in regard to himself, he wished the elector to understand more distinctly, that *all his hope and confidence* depended most entirely on the justice of his cause. The gospel which he defended and propagated, was by no means a device of his own, but a heavenly gift from Jesus Christ our Lord; that he therefore was a servant of Christ, and a teacher of the gospel, and that in future he intended to go by no other name. Hitherto, continued he, I have offered myself for public examination and inquiry; not indeed from any necessity, but because I had hoped that so much humility on my part, might be an inducement to others to listen to the truth. But now I see plainly, this extreme moderation is, by Satanic art, turned to the disadvantage of the gospel: I mean no longer to concede in the manner I have done during the last year; not however, through fear of danger, but from respect for my prince. When I entered Worms, I dreaded not the innumerable powers of hell; and surely this hostile duke George of Leipsic is not equal in strength or skill to a single infernal spirit. Moreover, the faithful derive from the gospel such a fund of courage and comfort, that they are allowed to invoke God as their Father. Well, therefore, may I despise the vengeance of this enraged duke.* Indeed, were the city Leipsic itself in the same condition that Wittemberg is, I would not hesitate to go there, though I were assured that for nine days together the heavens would pour down duke Georges, every one of which would be many times more cruel than the present duke of that name. As it has pleased God to permit this same duke George to treat Jesus Christ with the utmost indignity, it was doubtless my duty to submit; nay, I have prayed for him often, and I will again pray for him; though I am persuaded he would kill me with a single stroke if it were in hi power. I write these things that your highness may know, I consider myself, in returning to Wittemberg, to be under a far more powerful protection than any which the elector of Saxony can afford me. To be plain I do not wish to be protected by your highness. It never entered my mind to request your defence of my person. Nay, it is my decided judgment that, on the contrary, your highness will rather receive support and protection from the prayers of Luther and the good cause in which he is embarked. It is a cause which does not call for the help of the sword God himself will take care of it without human aid. I positively declare, that if I knew your highness intended to defend me by force, I would not now return to Wittemberg. This is a case where God alone should direct; and men should stand still and wait the event without anxiety, and that man will be found to defend both himself and others the most bravely, who has the firmest confidence in God. Your highness has but a very feeble reliance on God: and for that reason I cannot think of resting my defence and hopes of deliverance on you. Still you wish to know *what your duty is in this business*, and you express a fear that you may not have been sufficiently active. My answer is, you have already done *too much*, and that at present you ought to do nothing. God does not call that either your highness or myself should defend the cause of truth by force. If you do but believe this you will be quite safe; but if not, my faith on this head will remain unshaken, and I shall be compelled to leave you a prey to that anxiety which will attend your incredulity. If I should be taken, or even put to death, you must stand excused, even in the judgment of my best friends, because I have not followed your advice. Think not of opposing the emperor by force: permit him to do what he pleases with the lives and properties of your subjects. It seems impossible, however, that he should require you to be my executioner, when all the world know the privileges which belong to the place of my nativity. But if so unreasonable a demand should be made, and your highness should make me acquainted with the fact, I will engage, whether you do, or do not, believe me, that no harm shall happen to your highness on my account, either in body, or in mind, or in estate. Be assured, this business is decided in the counsels of heaven in a very different manner from what it is by the government at Nuremberg; and we shall shortly see that those who now dream they have absolutely devoured the gospel, have not as yet even begun their imaginary feast. There is another Being, abundantly more powerful than duke George, with whom I have to do. This Being knows me perfectly well, and I trust I have a little knowledge of HIM. If your illustrious highness could but believe this, you would see the glory of God. But you remain in darkness through your unbelief. Glory and praise be to God for evermore."

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* Duke George, was now beginning to persecute with the greatest cruelty, all persons who adhered to Lutheranism.

So extraordinary a letter has rarely been penned by a subject and transmitted to a kind prince, whose directions he was at that time positively disobeying. But Luther saw a DIVINE HAND in this whole struggle for christian liberty! As to Frederic, we see him trembling for the safety of Luther; and uneasy in his conscience lest he should desert the cause of God. What this wise prince would have done, in case Charles V. had seriously demanded Luther's person to be given up to the papal vengeance, it may be hard to say. His prudential maxims constantly led him to evade such a crisis if possible; and as he was well acquainted with the activity, and also the violence of Luther's disposition, nothing could be more natural than for him, through the medium of his confidential friends and agents, to have said, "Remain in your asylum for the present; you are under a sentence of condemnation, and you had better not provoke your enemies to execute it. The duke George who lives at Leipsic is your inveterate enemy, and it seems you have heard of the severe edict of Nuremberg.[†] It is not in my power to defend you beyond a certain point. Moreover, were I disposed to use force, I might lose

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[‡] The chief palace of this duke was at Dresden; but he was often at Leipsic.

my life and property in contending with a potentate so superior as the emperor of Germany. Still I would not shrink from my duty. Tell me plainly what you think I ought to do: perhaps I have been too timid in this momentous affair."

The preceding letter of Luther's must evidently appear to have been written in reply to such previous admonitions and observations as these; even though the greater part of them were not actually to be found among the several documents already before the reader.

The elector, upon receiving this answer, was astonished at the intrepidity of the reformer; and no doubt concluded, that, on his own part, the most consummate care and caution were never more called for than at the present juncture, for the purpose of tempering the impetuosity and fervor of the determinations of the man, whom, however, it was impossible he should not both admire and love. He therefore did not choose to communicate in writing his sentiments to Luthe himself, but directed a trusty agent, Jerome Schurff,* to say and do every thing which he wished to have said and done in this delicate business. Accordingly Schurff visited Luther, and after assuring him of th kindness and good will of the elector, informed him, it was his highness' desire, that he should compose a letter to him in a style somewhat different from the former; a letter, for example, which he might show to his friends, and to the princes, and to the othe great men of the country. In this letter he was t give the reasons which had induced him to return t Wittemberg, and he might openly avow that he ha taken this step without the orders of his prince; at th same time he ought to make a decent declaration, that he certainly intended to put no person whatever to inconvenience. Schurff concluded with saying, that the elector's entire meaning was to prevent sedition; that he anxiously desired most particular care to be take in that respect; and, therefore, for the present he would have Luther to abstain from preaching in the great church where the late tumult had happened; and lastly, he requested that this whole negociation might be kept a profound secret.

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* The same person who was Luther's advocate at Worms.

Schurff, in his answer to the elector, lavished praises upon Luther; he looked on him as an apostle and an evangelist of Christ. He said, all ranks and orders, learned and unlearned, were delighted with the return of the man, who was now daily, in the most admirable manner, teaching true doctrine and restoring order every where. Lastly, he informed the elector, that he found Luther completely disposed to write such a letter as had been desired.

In fact, Luther transmitted, through the medium of Schurff, a copy of the required letter, and left it to the elector to make such alterations as he should think necessary; but he added at the same time these remarkable words. "That most certainly he would not consent to do any thing which would not bear the light: that for his part, he should not be afraid, even if his former letter were made public; and that in regard to seditious tumults and commotions, he owned he had hitherto supposed, that the ecclesiastics would be the greatest sufferers; but on a diligent review of sacred history, he had been led to a different opinion. It had always happened, he said, that the princes and rulers were themselves the first sacrifices to popular fury;—however, not before they had corrupted themselves, and ceased to support the true religion."

Frederic in a few days informed Schurff, that there were in Luther's letter a few expressions which were rather too strong, and which therefore he wished him to alter. Luther assented.

The letter stands in the Latin edition of Luther's works without alteration, and is in substance to this effect:

"Most illustrious Prince, and most kind Master;

I have very diligently considered, that, in returning to Wittemberg without the permission of your clemency, and even without so much as asking that permission, it was my bounden duty to take care that this step should in no way prove injurious to your clemen-

cy. For I am well aware, that, with some appearanc
of truth, my conduct is capable of being represente
as causing a multitude of dangers and difficulties t
your person, to your government, and to your subjects
and more especially to myself,—being one, who ha
reason every hour to expect a violent death from th
imperial edicts, and the papal thunders. Howeve
what can I do? Inevitable reasons compel me to thi
step; the Divine will is plain, and leaves me n
choice. I must not act a double part to please an
creature in existence. Then be it so; come wha
will, I return to Wittemberg in the name of Jesu
Christ, who is the Lord of life and death.

That your clemency may not be ignorant of th
just grounds of my conduct, I have determined t
state faithfully the principal motives which have i
fluenced my mind in this business.

But in the first place, I would beg leave to depr
cate every supposition, which proceeds on the idea
my being moved by pride, or a contempt for the au
thority either of the emperor, or of your clemency,
of any magistrate. For though it may sometim
happen that the orders of human governments cann
be complied with, for example, when such orders a
directly repugnant to the word of God, yet there is n
case where THE POWERS THAT BE are to be DESPISE
They are ever to be treated with the greatest respe
So did Jesus Christ; who, though he abhorred t
sentence of Pilate, did not on that account either hu
Cæsar from his throne, or treat his representative wi
insolent language.

1. My first motive is, I am called back by the le
ters of the church and people of Wittemberg, and th
with much solicitation and entreaty. Now, sin
there is no denying that the reformation, which has a
ready taken place in that church, has been effect
through my instrumentality, and since I cannot b
own myself to be, in an especial manner, the minist
of the church to which God hath called me, it w
impossible for me to refuse a prompt compliance wi
their request, unless I intended to renounce altogeth

that labor and fidelity, which belongs to true christian charity and love of souls.

There are, indeed, those who throughout execrate our religious emendations, and call them diabolical; but their impieties will not excuse me at the tribunal of God, who will judge me, not by other men's consciences, but my own. I am most firmly persuaded, that from the first, my preaching and proceeding to divulge the gospel of Christ is not of my own motion, but the work of God. Nor, through God's help, shall any kind of death or persecution shake my confidence in this matter; and I believe I rightly divine, when I say that no terror or cruelty will be able to extinguish the light which already has begun to shine.

2. During my absence from Wittemberg, Satan hath made such inroads among my flock, and raised such commotions, as it is not in my power to repress by mere writing. My PRESENCE among my people is absolutely necessary. I must live with them. I must talk to them. I must hear them speak. They must see my mode of proceeding: I must guide them, and do them all the good I can. They are my children in Christ, and my conscience will not permit me to be absent from them any longer. Though I should offend your clemency, or bring upon myself the indignation of the whole world, the pressing necessity of the church ought in my judgment to take place of every other consideration.

3. A third motive is, I am much distressed by a well grounded apprehension, that some great and violent sedition will arise in Germany, and make that country undergo grievous punishments for its contempt and ingratitude towards a kind Providence. We see, indeed, numbers receive the light of the gospel with lively approbation and thankfulness; yet many are to be found, who abuse the precious gift to carnal purposes. And there are those, who, though it is their duty by a temperate conduct, to preserve peace and good order, aim at extinguishing every spark of heavenly light by cruel force and persecution; and thus do they madly inflame the bad passions of men, and, though

not aware of it, in fact blow the trumpet of sedition. All this tends evidently to the destruction of the country, and without doubt is a heavy judgment of God for the punishment of the inhabitants. My sole object in writing so much was to break to pieces the ecclesiastical system of despotism; and this, in a considerable degree, is done already. I now suspect it to be the Divine will that matters should proceed much further, as was the case with the Jews, when, on account of their persecution of the gospel, and other wickedness, it pleased God to destroy, root and branch, the city of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish constitution, civil and religious. It is only lately that I have begun to see, what, however, I might have seen long ago, because every line of sacred history clearly shows it, namely, that whether the thing be done in a good or bad grace, not only ecclesiastical and spiritual dominion, but also civil and political constitutions, must, in the end, give way to the gospel of Christ.

However, since God, through his prophet Ezekiel, requires us to oppose ourselves as a wall for the people, I have judged it needful to obey the Divine command, and, in concert with my friends, to take this matter into our most serious consideration, and to do every thing which we possibly can, in the way of instruction, admonition, and exhortation, to avert, or at least delay for some time, the heavy wrath of God. All I can do, MAY be in vain, and my enemies may ridicule my attempt; it will nevertheless be my bounden duty to do every thing which I think may tend to promote the laudable end I have in view. For I may venture to add with great truth, and I wish your clemency to be assured of the fact, THAT THE DECISIONS IN THE COUNSELS OF HEAVEN ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHICH ARE PRONOUNCED IN THE IMPERIAL ASSEMBLY AT NUREMBERG; and we shall soon see that those who now dream that they have absolutely devoured the gospel, have not as yet even begun their imaginary feast.

4. I could enumerate many other reasons, upon some of which, however, I do not lay any great stress, because I have not thoroughly considered them. It

is enough for me that the gospel is oppressed, and begins to labor. This single consideration has too much force in it for me to neglect my duty out of regard for any mortal being whatever.

I humbly, therefore, beseech your clemency, for these reasons, to take in good part my return to Wittemberg, without your clemency's knowledge, without having asked leave, and without orders. Your clemency is the lord of my poor frail body and little fortunes; but Christ is the Lord of the souls which he hath put under my care; and Christ also hath given me a spirit for the work. By no means, therefore, must I desert these souls. I trust my Lord and Master Jesus Christ will show himself more powerful than our enemies, and that he will please to defend and preserve me against all their fury. But if not, may his good will be done! On my account, no danger, no adversity shall happen to your clemency. And this promise I dare engage to fulfil.

MARTIN LUTHER."

Wittemberg,
March 14, 1522.

One of the expressions in this letter, which the elector desired might be softened, appears to have been that, in which a comparison is made between the decisions in the counsels of heaven, and those in the assembly at Nuremberg. In the German corrected copy, it stands thus, "The decisions in the counsels of heaven are very different from those ON EARTH."

From a letter to his friend Spalatinus, we collect, that Luther did not quite relish some of the alterations which the elector had desired to be made. "I am at this moment," says he, "sending my letter to the prince; who, by causing certain phrases therein to be altered according to his own mind, has discovered many marks of timidity, and want of faith. This infirmity of his, I ought to bear: but he has insisted on my using one word which I own does offend me; namely, in that I am directed to call the emperor my most KIND, or most MERCIFUL* Lord, when all the world knows he is to me as hostile as possible; and there is not an individual who will not laugh at this downright hypocrisy: yet I would rather submit to the ridicule and to the imputation of this species of hypocrisy, than thwart the infirmity of the prince in this instance. In regard to my conscience, I quiet that from the charge of insincerity thus: It is now the established custom to address the emperor in that manner; so that those words are to be considered as his proper name and title, to be used by all persons, even those to whom he has the greatest enmity.—After all, I have a most settled aversion to all hypocritical and disguised ways of speaking: hitherto I have given way to them quite enough: It is high time I should stand forth, and speak out."

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* Dominum clementissimum.

Often has it been said, that nothing could have been done without the intrepidity of honest Luther. Let this be admitted; but let it not be added, that such cautious men as the elector of Saxony could be of no use in the great struggle for christian liberty. This very prince was the instrument of preserving the life of the intrepid champion of the truth; and it seems utterly improbable that his inestimable life could have been saved, during such a storm of papal fury, aided by immense papal power, unless there had been in FREDERIC THE WISE, besides his extreme caution, an extraordinary assemblage of qualities, which added great weight and authority to character. Whoever reflects on these things with intelligence and devotion in his mind, will doubtless see the operation of a Divine hand in raising up this excellent prince, to preserve Martin Luther from the flames to which he was condemned by Charles V. and Leo X., as well as in bringing into the scene of public action, this eminent reformer himself, at the critical time when there was needed so disinterested and daring a spirit, and so wise an interpreter of the sacred oracles.

Luther, on his return to Wittemberg, resumed his favorite employment of preaching. He had to inform the judgment and calm the passions of a distracted multitude. For such a task few persons have been more eminently qualified than was Luther. He possessed, in a very high degree, the requisites which the most approved instructors in the art of eloquence have wished their pupils either to be endowed with by nature, or to acquire by diligence. Besides this, there prevailed almost universally a fixed opinion of his unexampled integrity, and of his extraordinary knowledge of the scriptures. His skill in the German language was great; the subjects which he had to handle were immensely important, and his manner of addressing his countrymen was most affectionate; well may we, therefore, cease to wonder that his discourses from the pulpit should have produced that happy restoration to peace and good order, which, quickly, after his arrival at Wittemberg, are known to have taken place both in the town and in the university.

On his first appearance in the pulpit after his return, Luther addressed his audience to the following effect. "Once more I am allowed to sound the gospel in your ears; once more you may derive benefit from my instruction. By and by death will come, and then we can do one another no good. How necessary therefore is it, that every individual should be furnished with the principles which are to support him at that awful moment! These principles are the great doctines of christianity; and by treasuring them up in your memories, you will act like wise men, and be fortified against the attacks of the enemy. I have often explained them to you on former occasions, and you have granted me a kind and patient hearing. At present I shall be as concise as possible.

"Firstly; that we are by nature children of wrath, and that all our own thoughts, our affections, and our works, can do us no good, is a fundamental truth, and we should have some solid scriptural passage always at hand to prove it. The Bible is full of passages which imply the very essence of this doctrine; but the third verse of the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians is directly to the purpose. Fix that verse deep in your mind; "We are all," says the apostle, "children of wrath." Beware then of saying, I have built a church, I have founded a mass, and such like;

"Secondly; The great and good Jehovah sent his only Son to us, that we might believe on him; and that whosoever does believe on him, might be free from the law of sin, and become a child of God. He gave them, says St. John, power to become the sons of God, namely, to those, who should believe on his name. In support of this point also, we should be well furnished with scriptural proofs, with which, as with the shield of Achilles, we may defend ourselves from the darts of the WICKED ONE. However, to confess the truth, I have not observed you to be deficient in the knowledge of either of these two fundamental articles of religion. I have preached on them very often before you; and I am not ashamed to own, that several of you are much more capable than I am o defending them by scriptural authority.

"But there is a third point, my dear friends, which we ought earnestly to aim at; namely, to do good t each other in love; as Christ hath shown his love t us by his works. Without this love, faith is a col speculation, and of no account. So says St. Pau "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have all faith, and have not charity, I am nothing." In this, dear friends, ye are, as yet, greatl defective. Nay, not a single vestige of love can I discover in you; a plain proof, that ye are not grateful t God for his rich mercies.

"Beware then lest Wittemberg should becom like Capernaum. Ye can discourse excellently o the doctrines which have been preached to you; y can even dispute acutely concerning charity. Bu this does not make a christian. The kingdom of Go does not consist in talk, but in power, that is, in work and in practice. God loves the doers of the word i faith and love, and not the mere hearers, who, lik parrots, have learnt to utter certain expressions wi readiness. Once more; faith without love is as it we a dream, an image of faith; just as the appearance a face in a glass is not a real face.

"Fourthly," continues Luther, "we have need of p tience. There must be persecution. Satan nev sleeps; but is constantly contriving something that is matter for our patience. Now patience begets hope. The christian learns entirely to commit his cause to God; his faith increases more and more, and he grows stronger every day.

"The heart which is furnished with these spiritual gifts thinks little of its own private advantages; but overflows with good will towards his brother, and for his sake forbears to do many things, which otherwise he might be allowed to do. "All things," says St. Paul, "are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient;" for all have not made equal advances in faith.

"To be plain; we ought to bear with the infirmities of our brethren, and to feed them with milk; and not to be so selfish as to think of arriving at heaven ALONE, but rather to try whether we cannot gain our brethren by kindness, and make them our companions in the road to the mansions of the blessed, though, for the present, they may be inimical to us. For example, if I had been with you lately, when ye were abolishing the masses, I should have endeavored to moderate your heat and impetuosity. Your cause was good, but was managed by you with too much violence.—There are, I trust, among the opposite party, many brothers and sisters who belong to us, and must be drawn to us by the cords of love. Let your faith be firm as a rock; but let your charity be pliable, and accommodated to the circumstances of your neighbor. Some can only creep, others can walk briskly, and others again are so swift that they can almost fly.

"The error of those, who abolished the masses, consisted, not in doing a thing that was wrong in itself, but in not doing what they did, in a right manner. Their proceedings were most rash and precipitate, and inconsistent with all the laws of order; and no wonder, therefore, that they gave offence to their neighbors. Such a business should not have been undertaken without serious prayers to God in the first place: and in the next place the assent of the magistrates should have been obtained: and thus it would have been manifest that these new regulations were ordained of

God. Long ago I might have taken the same step, if I had thought it either lawful or prudent. But the truth is, I so entirely disapprove the spirit with which you have acted, that if the mass were not in itself an abomination, I should be disposed to re-establish it. I could indeed plead your cause before the pope, but I cannot acquit you of having fallen into the snares of Satan. I wish you had asked my advice, which you might easily have done; I was at no such great distance."

In a subsequent discourse, in prosecution of the same subject, he spoke thus: "That the private masses ought to be abolished is as clear as that God is to be worshipped; and with my voice and my pen I would strenuously maintain that they are a most horrid abomination! Yet I would not pull away by force any one person from the mass. Let us preach the gospel; and commit the event to the Divine will. Let us say, "beloved countrymen, abstain, I beseech you, in future from the mass. Indeed, it is a blasphemous practice, and most highly offensive to Almighty God." But by no means would I compel them, especially by the hasty and intemperate decision of a mob, to comply with our forms of sacramental communion. No; I would instruct, I would admonish them from the sacred pages, that if they took my advice I should have happily gained them over to the truth; but if not, it does not become me to drag them away by the hair of the head, or to use violence of any other kind; but rather to leave the word of God to its own operation, and to pray for them. By acting in this manner, the force of scripture will penetrate the hearts of men, and produce an effectual and a durable change of sentiment. Proselytes will be made gradually; and when men are become, in general, of the same mind, then they will agree in laying aside their erroneous forms and ceremonies. In all this, I am far from wishing to restore the use of the mass. If it be abrogated, let it remain so. All I affirm is, what you must be convinced of, namely, that faith, in its very nature, is incapable of restraint or coercion.

"As an example, reflect on my conduct in the affair of the indulgences. I had the whole body of the papists to oppose. I preached, I wrote, I pressed on men's consciences with the greatest earnestness the positive declarations of the Word of God, but I used not a particle of force or constraint. What has been the consequence? This same Word of God has, while I was asleep in my bed, given such a blow to papal despotism, as not one of the German princes, not even the emperor himself could have done. It is not I, I repeat it, it is the Divine Word which has done every thing. Had it been right to have aimed at a reform by violence and tumults, it would have been easy for me to have deluged Germany with blood; nay, had I been in the least inclined to promote sedition, it was in my power, when I was at Worms, to have endangered the safety even of the emperor himself. The devil smiles in secret when men pretend to support religion by seditious tumults; but he is cut to the heart, when he sees them, in faith and patience, rely on the written word."

These extracts from Luther's sermons may suffice as specimens of the wisdom and discretion with which that reformer addressed and directed his congregation in this critical extremity, when the best friends of the protestant cause were almost in despair. They may also have other important uses, especially when taken in connexion with the other parts of this circumstantial account of Luther's motives for leaving the castle of Wartburg. For example; they demonstrate, in general, the enlightened state of the mind of the great German reformer at this very early period of the reformation; and they furnish the completest answer to the invidious conjecture of those, who have imagined that "the true reason of his displeasure at the proceedings of Carolstadt was, that he could not bear to see another crowned with the glory of executing a PLAN which he had laid."* .....

The people of Wittemberg heard their beloved pastor with the greatest satisfaction: and again tranquillity and concord began to flourish in the church.—The importance of Carolstadt vanished before the influence of Luther; and, after various travels and schemes, he became fixed at Basil, where he exercised the pastoral office for ten years, and died in 1531.

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* The facts prove that Luther laid no plan at all His eyes opened by degrees, and he was faithful to the light afforded him. He acted to the best of his judgment always at the moment, and committed his cause to God, completely ignorant of what he might be called to do or to suffer; but as completely disposed to obey what should appear to him to be the Divine will.

Luther, in a letter to the prior of Eisleben, gives the following concise account of the misunderstanding between Carolstadt and himself.

"I offended Carolstadt," says he, "because I annulled his institutions; though I by no means condemned his doctrine. In one point, however, he grieved me much. I found him taking prodigious pains about ceremonies and things external, and, at the same time, very negligent in inculcating the essential principles of christianity, namely, faith and charity. By his injudicious method of teaching, he had induced many of the people to think themselves christians, however deficient in these graces, provided they did but communicate in both kinds, take the consecrated elements into their own hands, refuse private confession, and break images. Observe how the malice of Satan attempts to ruin the gospel in a new way. All along, my object has been, by instruction to emancipate the consciences of men from the bondage of human inventions of every kind; and then the papal fooleries would soon fall of themselves by common consent. But Carolstadt suddenly set himself up as a new teacher, and, by his own arbitrary institutions, endeavored to ruin my credit with the people."

There only now remained, as an object of contention, the turbulence and fanaticism of the prophets, already mentioned. The associates of Stubner pressed him to defend his pretension openly, and to confront the reformer, who, by his sermons and his authority, had nearly restored peace and unanimity among the people. With much reluctance, Luther consented to hold a conference, in the presence of Melancthon, with this enthusiast and Cellary and another of the same fanatical sect. Our sagacious reformer patiently heard the prophet relate his visions; and when the harangue was finished, recollecting that nonsense was incapable of confutation, he briefly admonished him to take care what he did. You have mentioned, said he, nothing that has the least support in scripture; the whole seems rather an ebullition of imagination, or perhaps, the fraudulent suggestion of an evil spirit. Cellary, in a storm of indignation, stamped on the ground, struck the table with his hands, and expressed the most lively resentment that Luther should dare to say such things of so divine a personage. Stubner, with more calmness, told Luther he would give him a proof that he was influenced by the Divine Spirit: for, said he, I will reveal your own thoughts at this moment. You are inclined to believe my doctrine true, notwithstanding what has passed. The man, however, totally mistook in his conjecture; for Luther afterwards declared that he was then meditating on the divine sentence, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan." The prophets now boasted and threatened, in the most pompous and extravagant terms, what surprising things they would do to establish their commission; but Luther thought proper to put an end to the conversation by dismissing them with these words, "The God whom I serve and adore will confound your vanities." That very day they left the town, and sent letters to Luther full of execrations and abuse. —The leaders, however, being gone, their disciples dwindled in number; and for the present the delusion was quashed.*

It was not, however, in the power of Luther, to infuse into all his followers the moderate and cautious spirit with which he himself, notwithstanding the warmth of his temper, was constantly possessed. He expresses his grief, that many monks, deserting their monasteries, flocked to Wittemberg, and married immediately, actuated by no better motives than those of mere sensuality; from which he foresaw the scandal which would arise against the gospel. He complains, that wickedness still abounded among those who professed to abhor the papacy, and that they had the kingdom of God among them too much in WORD, instead of power. There were, however, some of those that deserted the monasteries, who gave the most shining proofs of genuine godliness, and who were the most active instruments of the propagation of the gospel. Nor were their labors, or those of Luther, in vain: many souls were turned from the power of Satan to God. It required only the exercise of common candor and equity to acknowledge the utility of the reformation in these and other important instances, and not to expect from the labors of a few upright pastors the entire renovation of the human species. Luther's zeal was no less vehement against the ABUSE of christian liberty, than it was against papal bondage; he was cautious and slow in the promotion of external changes in the church, ardent and intent on the advancement of internal religion; he lamented the perverseness of hypocritical professors; he checked the ferocious spirits of the forward and the turbulent: and demonstrated his own sincerity by a perfect contempt of all secular arts to obtain applause and popularity. It was not to be supposed, that all men who had been habituated to folly and wickedness under the popedom, should immediately, on hearing his sermons, commence real saints; it is rather to be admired as a great effect of Divine grace that so many gave substantial proofs of genuine conversion.

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* These fanatical prophets opposed the baptism of infants; and appear to have been among the very first of the turbulent German anabaptists; a sect, which ought never to be confounded with the baptists of our times.

His personal circumstances were all this time truly distressing. He thus describes them in a letter to Gerbelius of Strasburg. "I am now encompassed with no guards, but those of heaven: I live in the midst of enemies, who have a legal power of killing me every hour. This is the way in which I comfor myself; I know that Christ is Lord of all, that the Father hath put all things under his feet, among the res the wrath of the emperor, and all evil spirits. If it please Christ that I should be slain, let me die in his name; if it do not please him, who shall slay me Do you only, with your friends, take care to assist the cause of the gospel by your prayers.—For because through our grievous ingratitude, we hold the gospe in word only, and not in power, and are more elated in knowledge than edified in charity, I fear our Germany will be drenched in blood." To Langus the pastor of Erfurt he wrote thus. "I must not come to you; it behoveth me not to tempt God, by seeking dangers elsewhere, when I am full of them here already, excluded as I am by the papal and imperial anathemas, exposed to be murdered by any one, absolutely with no protection except that which is from above."

Amidst all these difficulties, however, he remitted not his usual vigor and activity. During his confinement he had studied the Hebrew with persevering industry, and had translated the whole New Testament into the German language. And in the course of this year, 1522, he published the version. He then proceeded to apply his Hebrew studies to the translation of the Old Testament, which he also published gradually, and finished the whole in the year 1530. In this work he was much assisted by the labour and advice of several of his friends, particularly Justus Jonas and Philip Melancthon. The whole performance itself was a monument of that astonishing industry which marked the character of this reformer. The effects of this labour were soon felt in Germany; immense numbers now read in their own language the precious word of God, and saw with their own eyes the just foundations of the Lutheran doctrine. To decide on he merits of Luther's translation, would require, not only an exact knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek, but also of the German language; certainly it was elegant and perspicuous, and, beyond comparison, preferable to any scriptural publication which had before been known to the populace. It is probable that his work had many defects; but, that it was in the nain faithful and sound, may be fairly presumed from he solid understanding, biblical learning, and multifarious knowledge of the author and his coadjutors.—A more acceptable present could scarcely have been conferred on men, who were emerging out of darkness; and the example being followed soon after by reformers in other nations, the real knowledge of scripture, i we take into the account the effects of the art of printing, was facilitated to a surprising degree.

The papacy saw all this and sighed indignant.

Emser, a doctor of Leipsic, endeavored to depreciate the credit of Luther's version; and the popish princes, within the bounds of their respective dominions, ordered the work to be burnt. Nor was their resentment appeased by the advice which Luther openly gave to their subjects, which was this,—patiently t bear their sufferings without resisting their governors but not to come forward voluntarily and deliver up their German bibles, nor to do any act, which migh testify an approbation of the requisitions of their superiors on the occasion.

In the mean time, George of Saxony, incensed a the growth of Lutheranism, and expostulating repeatedly with his nephew the elector, on account of his conduct, began to encourage the papal bishops to exert themselves in their respective dioceses. Among these, John a Schleinig, bishop of Misnia, commences an episcopal visitation in this year. The elector refused not his consent; too timid to withstand openly the power of the popedom, and too conscientious to undertake the decision of theological cases, to which he confessed his knowledge to be inadequate. A long course of superstitious servility from his early years had enfeebled in religious matters, the intellectual powers of this prince, which, in secular affairs, were justly looked on as exceedingly eminent. His labor and expense in the collection of relics had been astonishing; yet amidst all his superstitions, doubts and embarrassments, he had constantly preserved a secret predilection for something of evangelical truth; and, on no occasion would suffer it to be oppressed by violence though through life he never openly supported it.*—

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* There is on record a notable instance of the resolute determination of th good prince to protect his subjects from papal cruelty. A clergyman of Schmiedberg, in the electorate of Frederic, complained to the elector, that attemp had been made to carry him away by force to Stolpen, the place of the residen of the bishop of Misnia. This bishop also, about the same time, accused t said clergyman of not appearing to a citation which he had sent to him, and entreated the prince to compel his subject to obedience. Frederic replied, th

Thus, in the course of Divine Providence, the foundations of the reformation were laid in Germany by the preaching and exposition of the word of God, with no more aid from the civil power than that of a connivance, firm indeed, and unalterable, but ever bearing the marks of hesitation and indecision. That Frederic should permit the bishop of Misnia, an avowed and professional adversary of Luther, to visit the churches, might alarm the minds of many; but it produced no mischievous effects. He preached, he warned, he expostulated, through the diocese; but the papal arguments were now stale, insipid, and ineffective.—So much light had been diffused through Saxony, that this prelate's defence of masses of communion in one kind, of the pope's authority and infallibility, and of the Romish tenets, appeared ridiculous to the laity.—Other bishops, with the consent of the elector, made the same perigrinations with the same effect; and it required all the power and rigor of the duke George to keep his own subjects within the bounds of papal obedience. So much more happy did the subjects of Frederic, who enjoyed liberty of conscience, seem to be than themselves, who remained papists by constraint; and so much light from the proximity of their situation, had they received concerning the nature of true religion.

But the difficulties of providing for the instruction and edification of the Lutheran churches began now to be more apparent. While, on the one hand, the bishops, and many of the clergy and monks, who still adhered to the old system were laboring to harrass and perplex the minds of all serious inquirers after Divine truth, on

he grounds of the citation ought to have been stated; and that he would not ermit his clergy to be taken by force, and carried out of his dominions, withut his knowledge and approbation. The fault of this clergyman appears to have een, that he labored under the suspicion of being married. Some other cases f a like sort happened during this year. The bishop remonstrated; but Frederc continued steady; and would allow no force to be employed against his clery. Further, he desired the bishop to appeal to him no more against them on ccount of their being married. He might use, he said, his ecclesiastical jurisliction against them if he pleased. The elector had learnt, that this tyrannical ishop had shut up in a noisome prison three clergymen belonging to the disrict of duke George; and had actually put another to death. Seck.

the other, many of the people were panting for the benefit of a church order, more emancipated from superstitions, and better adapted to the evangelica ideas, which they were continually receiving, eithe from reading the books or hearing the sermons of Luther and his associates. In this crisis the reforme was consulted by the parochial clergy of some of the principal towns in Saxony, who approved of the alterations which he had introduced into Wittemberg with the consent of the inhabitants and the connivance o the elector, and who, therefore, were anxious to enquire and try whether improvements of a similar kind might not be made in other places. This application gave rise to a little treatise, which Luther publishe in the year 1523. The exordium of this tract shows the principles of the external reformation, which wa gradually introduced into various parts of Germany where Lutheranism prevailed, and illustrates the customs of the churches while they were yet in an imperfect state of discipline. "Hitherto," said he, "by books and by preaching I have labored among thi people, to inform their minds, and to draw their heart from false dependences; thinking it a christian employment, if possible, *to break without hands* the abomination which Satan, by the man of sin, had set u in the holy place. I have attempted nothing forcibly nothing imperiously; nor have I changed old customs; being always afraid of doing mischief, partly on account of those who are weak in faith, and canno suddenly be divested of old prejudices or induced t acquiesce in new modes of worship, but principally because of those light and fastidious spirits, who rus on without faith and without understanding, and delight in novelty only, and are presently disgusted when the charms of novelty are ceased. In othe subjects, persons of this turn of mind are sufficiently troublesome; in religion, however, they are perpetually so: still it is my duty to bear them, though my temper must thereby be tried to the utmost; unless indeed, I were to cease all my attempts to spread the gospel among the public. But, as I now flatter myself that the hearts of many are both enlightened and strengthened by the grace of God, and as the circumstances require that scandals should at length be removed out of the kingdom of Christ, we ought to attempt something in HIS NAME. For it is highly proper, that we should consult for the good of the few, lest while we perpetually dread the levity and abuses of the many, we should do good to none; and lest, while we dread future scandals, we should confirm the general abominations. We will therefore endeavor in the sacramental forms, so to regulate the use of them, that we may not only instruct the hearts of the people, but also recommend a public administration of them, without pretending to impose our ideas upon others. And we entreat the brethren heartily, through Jesus Christ, that if any thing better be revealed to them, they would exhibit it, that the public benefit may be conducted by public counsel." On this plan Luther undertook to remove some of the most flagrant abuses in baptism and the Lord's supper, and to recommend communion in both kinds, while he tolerated, till a more favorable opportunity should occur, many less matters not directly sinful, though inconvenient and useless; in the mean time, his zeal exerted all its vehemence on the essentials of salvation; real faith and real piety.

Private masses were still celebrated in the great church at Wittemberg. By means of these, persons who had money, were taught by the supporters of the iniquitous traffic of the court of Rome, that they could procure to themselves the favor of God, in their journeys, voyages, and such like, and even after death. Of this iniquitous practice Luther complained, but he could not bring the people immediately to renounce it. But on the death of some of the most obstinate canons of Wittemberg, he found an opportunity of gradually annihilating this great bulwark of popery. In the mean time it did not escape the sagacity of our reformer, that the alterations which were daily taking place, in consequence of the protestant doctrines, would in many instances be attended with a dangerous redundance of ecclesiastical revenue. The monasteries and colleges would soon be deserted, and it was not probable that new inhabitants would succeed the old ones. He foresaw, that much scandal and great abuses might arise from this circumstance, unless certain effectual precautions were taken in due time, to prevent the superfluous money from becoming a temptation to the rapacity or covetousness of worldly minded men. On the subject, therefore, of a proper application of ecclesiastical property, he freely published his thoughts, and proposed that a sort of common treasury should be made of the above mentioned revenues, and they should be applied to the erection of schools and hospitals, the maintenance of preachers, and other pious and laudable objects. This advice gave great offence to the papal party; and Luther was accused by them, of setting up himself by his own private authority as the supreme lawgiver, and also, of attempting to gratify the German princes with the plunder of the church.

During these unceasing efforts of the reformer to promote the glory of God in the recovery and establishment of christian liberty, his grand adversary: George, duke of Saxony, was making every exertion to support the declining credit of the papal system. He wrote to John, duke of Saxony, the brother of Frederic, and complained heavily of the heretical transactions at Wittemberg and Zwickau, and of the remissness of his brother the elector. He stated that the faithful clergy were insulted, and pelted with stones, while those of the Lutheran sect married wives, and wrote books in defence of the marriage of the monks: that there were some, destitute of all religion, who denied the immortality of the soul. All these evils, he said, arose from the novel doctrines of the arch-heretic; and gave him more pain, since he had found the contagion was spreading among his own subjects. He concluded with beseeching his nephew John to do his utmost to convince the elector Frederic, how absolutely necessary it had become that he should clear himself of the suspicion of heresy, either by punishing the innovators, or, at least, openly expressing his disapprobation of their proceedings. He would gladly concur with his two nephews in suppressing the growing mischief, and had more to say on this subject. To this exhortation, John, duke of Saxony, who will shortly appear to have been a staunch protestant, and who well knew how fruitless would be any attempt to argue with his prejudiced uncle, returned no more than a concise and civil reply; that he would not fail to communicate with his brother the elector, and would be ready to pay due attention to any further advice the duke George might think proper to give.

But George, in his determined bigotry, was not satisfied merely with using persuasions. He had recourse to methods which he supposed more efficacious to secure the unity of the church. Under the authority of the emperor, and in concert with Aleander and other enemies of the reformation, he had procured a severe edict to be passed at Nuremberg against the principles of Luther, and was now laboring in every way he could devise to render it effective. It was in obedience to the special directions of this edict that the bishops began their penal and coercive visitations; and it was under the sanction of the same tyrannical measure, that George, by imprisonments and other cruelties, supported, through every part of his territory, the ecclesiastical inquisitions. Moreover, this active zealot, to render his plans of persecution more extensive, tried once more, by a literary correspondence, to obtain the co-operation of the elector of Saxony. He said, the reputation of that wise prince was suffering from a want of vigorous animadversion on the apostate clergy; he had heard during his stay at Nuremberg many reports of the profane doctrines and irregular practices of the schismatics under Frederic's jurisdiction: and to be brief, he neither understood, nor wished to understand, all the obscure hints which were thrown out to the disadvantage of his nephew.

Upon the elector's having demanded an explanation of this inuendo, George owned that he had not heard of any specific charge being made against the person of Frederic, but that nevertheless numbers of people expressed their astonishment, that so good a prince should tolerate the heresy and disobedience even of his own professors and teachers. A doctor, an ex-monk at Eislenberg, named Gabriel, was said to be a principal instigator of all this mischief. Moreover, they accused Carolstadt of being married, and Melancthon of doing such things as the very Hussites would have held in abhorrence. The duke George protested that the hearing of these things gave him the greatest concern; and he heartily wished that those, who boasted of having caused so much evangelical light in the electorate of Frederic, had been preaching their gospel at Constantinople; for he was sure they had brought upon their prince, now in his old age, abundance of ignominious reflections. He concluded with earnestly exhorting the elector to punish most severely the refractory monks and priests, and thereby give proof of his piety and regard to duty.

The elector replied concisely, but with great prudence and moderation. He had hoped, he said, that the duke his uncle, on such an occasion, would have behaved like a friend and a christian; that he would not have given credit to slanderous reports, but have defended himself from the charge of countenancing irreligion and impiety. Reports of that sort were to be despised, and their punishment left to the Almighty. He himself should never approve any thing that was contrary to the honor of God, the sound judgment of the holy fathers, and the salvation of mankind: and as to those who were guilty in these respects, it was at their own peril; they must take the consequences: and should they prove to be his own subjects, he should assuredly punish them, when convicted of any illegal act.

But the mild and decorous language of Frederic did not produce any durable or substantial change on the mind of duke George in favor of reason, humanity, and christian liberty. He continued to persecute with unrelenting cruelty, those clergy of his own district who were in the least disposed to Lutheranism, and likewise all persons who ventured to communicate at the

Lord's supper in both kinds. He recalled from the schools and universities, wherever he supposed the new doctrines prevailed, all the students who were under his power or influence. He purchased as many copies of Luther's version of the New Testament, as he could collect, with a view to destroy the work, and severely punished such subjects as refused to deliver them up. Emboldened by these rigorous proceedings of the duke, his bigoted ecclesiastics raged against Lutherans with increased violence and rancor. The pulpits in Leipsic resounded with vindictive declamation; and the bishops in their visitations denounced the most cruel punishments against all who should dare either to read Luther's translation, or to go into the neighboring district of the elector of Saxony for the purpose of hearing the sermons of the reformers. But the blind persecutors were not then sensible how completely they were defeating their own designs by these cruelties. The seminaries of education at Leipsic were more and more deserted: the young students, impelled by curiosity, a thirst of knowledge, or a hatred of compulsion, fled to Wittemberg, now famous for rational inquiry and christian liberty.

The papal historian Maimbourg confesses, that Luther's translations of the old and New Testament were remarkably elegant, and in general so much approved that they were read by almost every body throughout Germany. Women of the first distinction studied them with the most industrious and persevering attention, and obstinately defended the tenets of the reformed against bishops, monks, and catholic doctors. Hence the necessity of some speedy ANTIDOTES, which might resist the ravages of such contagious publications.

Jerom Emser, a Leipsic Doctor, and a counsellor of the duke George, was fixed upon as best qualified to furnish THESE. This champion of the papacy first published his puerile, but calumnious Notes on Luther's New Testament: and afterwards, through the encouragement of George and two bishops, produced what was called a correct translation of the New

Testament into German, but which in fact was little more than a transcript of Luther's labors, some alterations in favour of the peculiar tenets of the church of Rome excepted. The performances of Emser, so far as they were his own, were deemed contemptible in the highest degree, on account of the malignant, cavilling disposition of their author, and also of his extreme ignorance of the German language. He left out Luther's preface and inserted his own, and then sold the translation as his own. The book was read; and thus the design of Luther's labors was promoted by his very enemies.

Henry, duke of Brunswic, followed George in his zeal and barbarity in support of the popedom, as did also the emperor's brother, Ferdinand, archduke of Austria. This latter issued a severe edict to prevent the publication of Luther's translation of the bible, which had soon gone through several editions; and he forbade all the subjects of his imperial majesty to have any copies either of that or any of Luther's books. In Flanders the persecution appears to have been extreme. Many, on account of their adherence to Lutheranism, were put to death, or deprived of their property, by the most summary and tyrannical proceedings. At Antwerp, however, the monks were remarkably favorable to the reformation. Many of them suffered death with patience and firmness, others were punished in various ways, after having, through long imprisonment and the dread of losing their lives, been compelled to recant.

Luther was now at open war with the pope, his cardinals and bishops; and while they were endeavoring to keep the scriptures from the people, to darken their understandings, and to implant in their minds an implicit confidence in the dogmas of their constitution; Luther was endeavoring by all rational and scriptural methods to diffuse light and knowledge among them. He took great pains to instruct the ignorant, and to make proselytes to the great truths of God's word. To this end he conversed, he preached and wrote with almost unexampled industry. He placed the controverted parts in various lights, and often overwhelmed his adversaries with the rapidity of his productions.

Antichrist became more furious and unrelenting, as his empire diminished, and seemed hastening to destruction; and the papal adherents more cruel and sanguinary in their proceedings against the reformer and his disciples. But with Luther, there was no other vengeance which he dared to inflict, beyond that of exposing, by scripture and reason, the unreasonableness, the ignorance, the absurdities, and the blasphemies of his enemies. While his bigoted enemies continued malignant and outrageous, it was his uninterrupted consolation to reflect, that his cause was the cause of God and his Christ; that he had wielded no weapon in the conflict but that of the Divine word; and that while his own life, and the lives of his associates, were every moment in the most imminent peril through the barbarous zeal of his persecutors, he was undermining the very principles of persecution itself, and paving the way for their total extinction.

In the course of the present year, Luther published several tracts in the German language; the most elaborate of which is entitled, Martin Luther, against the order, falsely called, the ecclesiastical order of pope and bishop. In this work he styles himself simply the PREACHER. He was stripped, he said, by the pope's bulls, of the titles of priest and doctor, which, however, he willingly resigned, having no desire to retain any mark of distinction conferred by papal authority.

"Ye bishops," said he, "revile me as a heretic, but I regard you not. I can prove that I have a much greater claim to the title of preacher, than ye can that ye answer the scriptural description of bishops. Nor have I any doubt, but that Christ, in the great day of account, will testify to the truth of my doctrine, which indeed is not mine, but that of God and the spirit of the Lord. Your outrageous violence can profit you nothing: the more you give way to this insanity, the more steady and determined, through God's help, shall be my opposition. Nay, though ye should kill me, ye men of blood, ye will not destroy this doctrine, as long as Christ lives. Moreover, I foresee there will be an end of your tyranny and of your murders.

"Further, since ye are open enemies of the truth, I tell you plainly, that for the future I will not deign to submit my doctrine either to your judgment or to that of an angel from heaven. Surely I have already shown sufficient humility in offering myself three times for examination at the last diet of Worms; and all to no purpose. I shall now go on and discharge my duty as a preacher. It is at men's peril if they reject my doctrine, for it is of God; I repeat it, it is of God.

"In one word, sirs, this is my resolution. As long as I live, my attacks on your abominations shall grow bolder and fiercer. I will make no truce with you. And if ye slay me, ye shall still be further from peace. As the prophet Hosea says, I will be unto you "as a lion, as a leopard by the way." My most earnest wish is, that ye should repent; but if ye will not repent, there must be perpetual war between us. I shall put my trust in God, and not care one straw for your hatred; and ye will be in danger every moment of falling under the heavy judgment of the Divine displeasure."

The author then proceeds to show how much those were to be valued who were bishops indeed, and governed their flocks according to the rules prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus; and how exceedingly opposite to the apostolical standard was the general character of the bishops of his own time. They were ignorant, debauched, and tyrannical; enemies to the gospel and the truth; idolaters, who followed the traditions of men, and worshipped the pope. The monasteries, and collegiate churches had become, in a great measure, theatres of useless ceremonies. "I wish," says he, "that where there are now a hundred monasteries, there was but one; and that of a hundred collegiate churches, there was left but one or two, and that these were used as seminaries of education for christian youth. For, however holy these institutions may seem to be in their external appearance, they abound with hypocritical and Satanic corruptions; nor is it possible to prevent them from being the road to hell, unless the pure gospel should be constantly preached and taught, as the governing principle, forming and establishing the christian character, through the exercises of temptation and the cross, with a lively faith and hope."

The author likewise reprobates, in the most glowing terms, the pride, the luxury, avarice, and licentiousness of the dignified ecclesiastics. Their boasted chastity and continence was all pretence, the source of infinite mischief to young persons. The bishops would not marry, but were allowed to have as many harlots as they pleased. They went about with prodigious pomp and a numerous retinue; and ruined the souls of the poor, often driven to despair by their tyrannical excommunications, while their greedy officials tortured their bodies after they had plundered them of their property.

" But," says he, " the most atrocious and most mischievous poison of all the papal usages is, that, where the pontiff, in his bulls of indulgence, grants a full remission of sins. Christ, in the 9th of Matthew, did not say to the sick of the palsy, " Put money into this box," but " Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." No words nor conceptions can reach the atrocity and abomination of this Satanic invention: for through this mean the people are seduced from the purity and simplicity of that faith, which by relying on the gracious promises of God, alone justifies, and obtains remission of sins; and they are led to put their trust in the pope's bulls, or in paying certain prescribed sums of money, or in their own works and satisfactions.

" I do therefore earnestly entreat the christian reader, through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to expect moderation in me while I speak on this subject, roused as my spirit is with a just and rational resentment. Surely every christian must be grieved to the very bottom of his heart, when he is daily compelled to see and put up with such impudent and outrageous blasphemy against God. The bishops, on account of this ONE thing, deserve far greater severity than I have ever used in all that I have said of them. Nay, the strongest language which I could possibly use, when my feelings are most vehement and indignant with reflecting on the insanity of such proceedings, would not reach the thousandth part of their aggravated guilt. However, let no man suppose that what I now say against these ecclesiastical tyrants is applicable to a sound state of the church, or to true bishops or good pastors. Our present rulers are not bishops; they know nothing of the duty of a bishop; they are the Antichrists of the apostle; they would ruin mankind, and extinguish the gospel. I wish to speak plainly, and, as it were, to perform the office of a public herald; and to make it manifest every where, that the bishops, who at present govern the greatest part of the world, are not of God's appointment, but have the foundation of their authority in the tradition of men and the delusion of Satan."

Further, in the body of this spirited performance the author inserts what he calls the BULL AND REFORMATION OF LUTHER, in contemptuous imitation and defiance of the papal bulls. It is to this effect: "All persons who spend their lives and fortunes, and every faculty they possess, in endeavoring to overturn and extinguish the present diabolical constitution and government of the bishops, are to be esteemed as true christians, fighting for the gospel, in opposition to the ministers of Satan. And though they may not absolutely succeed in their attempts, yet are they bound openly to condemn the said episcopal constitution, and to set their faces against it as an abomination. For whoever exhibits a voluntary obedience and subjection to that impious and tyrannical system, is so far a soldier of Satan, and at open war with the holy laws of God."

This gave great offence to the papists, and has been produced by them as a direct proof of the seditious spirit of the Saxon reformer. But Luther immediately after the declaration in his bull, proceeds thus;

'These propositions I undertake to prove, even at the ribunal of Almighty God, by unanswerable argunents. The apostle Paul directs Titus to ordain bishps in every city; men who should each of them be lameless, the husband of one wife, and whose charcter should agree with the rest of his description. uch then is the mind of the Holy Spirit, speaking by he apostle Paul in the clearest terms. I call on the ishops to defend themselves. They are at issue, not vith me, but with the apostle Paul, and the Holy pirit, which, as Stephen said, they always resist. Is t not plain that these are they whose mouths must be topped, because they subvert whole houses, and teach hings which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake?

"☞ Nevertheless, it should always be carefully bserved, that when I speak of overturning and extinuishing the reign of the bishops, I would by no means e understood as though this resolution should be rought about by the sword, or by force, or by any pecies of tumultuary violence and compulsion: such estructive methods are totally inapplicable to this mportant business, which is indeed the cause of God. he kingdom of Antichrist, according to the prophet aniel's prediction, must be broken WITHOUT HAND; hat is, the scriptures will be understood by and by, nd every one will speak and preach against the papal yranny from the word of God; until THIS MAN OF SIN s deserted by all his adherents, and dies of himself. his is the true christian way of destroying him; and o promote this end we ought to exert every nerve, ncounter every danger, and undergo every loss and nconvenience."

During these vehement exercises of the voice and en of Luther on the one hand, and the sufferings of he protestants on the other, the word of God was reached with much success in various parts of Gernany. With how great success, may be seen, from he brief, which pope Adrian VI. the successor of Leo . addressed by his legate, Cheregato, to the German rinces, assembled in the imperial diet of Nuremberg. his brief was full of the most virulent invectives against Luther; who, Adrian says, notwithstanding the sentence of Leo X. which was ordered by the edict of Worms to be executed without delay, continued to teach the same errors, and by his fresh publications, daily to corrupt the morals of the people: That the contagion of his poisoned tongue, like a pestilence, pervaded the country to a prodigious extent and, what was the worst part of the mischief, he was supported, not only by the vulgar, but by several persons of distinction, who had begun to shake off thei obedience to the clergy, plunder them of their property, and raise civil commotions. The pope had hoped that a venemous plant of this sort could not have grown in Germany; whereas, in fact, it had taken root, and shot forth large boughs, through the negligence of those who ought to have prevented the evil Surely, said he, it was a most unaccountable thing that so large and religious a nation should be seduced by a single pitiful friar, who had apostatized from the way which our Lord and his apostles, and the martyrs, and so many illustrious persons, and among the rest, the ancestors of the German princes, had all followed to the present time! "What," said he, "is Luther alone possessed of wisdom and the Holy Spirit? Has the church been in ignorance till Luther afforded us this new light? Ridiculous! Be assured, ye princes of Germany, this Lutheran patronage of evangelical liberty is a mere pretence. Already ye must have discovered it to have been a cloke for robbery and violence; and ye cannot doubt that those who have torn and burnt the sacred canons, and the decrees of councils and popes, will have no respect for the laws of the empire. They have shaken off their obedience to bishops and priests; they will not spare the persons, houses, and goods of the laity."

Lastly, Adrian exhorted the diet to be unanimous in their endeavors to extinguish this devouring flame of heresy, and bring back to a sense of their duty the arch-heretic and his abettors. But if the ulcerations and extent of the cancer appeared to be such as to leave no place for mild and lenient medicines, recourse must be had to the cautery and the knife.

So the Almighty inflicted capital punishment on Dathan and Abiram, for their disobedience to the priest.

So PETER, THE HEAD OF THE APOSTLES, denounced sudden death on Ananias and Sapphira; and, so the ancestors of the German princes, at the council of Constance, inflicted condign punishment on John Huss and Jerom of Prague, heretics, that seem to be now alive again in the person of Luther, their great admirer.

Thus Adrian, in his brief which he addressed to the diet of Nuremberg, admitted that the doctrines of the reformation were widely disseminated; that they were very alarming to all who were desirous of still maintaining the domination of the court of Rome. And feeling, that their craft was in danger, he showed himself troubled at the progress of Lutheranism, and that he felt it to be necessary to adopt vigorous measures for its suppression. He directed his nuncio to affirm to the diet, that the design of the heretic was to destroy all authority, under the sanction of christian liberty. This sect was the cause of robberies, quarrels, and scandals. Mahomet had drawn men to his party by gratifying their sensual appetites; Luther seduced them in a similar way, by allowing monks, nuns, and lascivious priests to marry. The nuncio was then charged TO OWN explicitly, that all this confusion was the effect of the sins of the clergy and prelates; that for some years past, MANY ABUSES, ABOMINATIONS, and EXCESSES, had been committed in the court of Rome, even in the holy see itself; that every thing had degenerated to a great degree; and that it was no wonder if the evil had passed from THE HEAD to the members; from the popes to the bishops and other ecclesiastics. "We have all," says the pope, "every one of us, turned to his own way, and for a long time none hath done good, no not one. Let us give glory to God, and humble our souls before him; and every individual among us consider how great has been his fall, and judge himself, that God may not judge us in his wrath. Nothing shall be wanting on my part to reform the court of Rome, whence, perhaps, all th mischief hath originated: that as this court hath bee the source of the corruptions which have thence sprea among the lower orders, so from the same, a soun reformation may proceed." He concluded with ob serving how much he had this business at heart, bu that they must not wonder if ALL these abuses coul not be SOON corrected. The disease was complicate and inveterate, and the cure must proceed step b step, lest by attempting to do all at once, every thin should be thrown into confusion.

These concessions of Adrian, gave offence to th cardinals at Rome. They appear, however, to hav been no more than mere artifice, designed to rais men's expectations, to delay the calling of a genera council, to gain time to sound the disposition of prin ces, and in the mean time, to take effectual measure to secure the apostolical power and dignity. Luthe appears to have had this idea of Adrian's concessions for he translated the pontifical mandates into Germa and added short marginal notes; one of which, on th expression "the cure must proceed step by step," thus sarcastically expressed, "You are to understan those words to mean there must be an interval SOME AGES between each step."

The publication of the pope's brief, and his explan atory instructions in the diet, seemed at first, to hav made a strong impression on a great part of that as sembly; and as his nuncio had accused the clergy Nuremberg of preaching impious doctrines, and ha insisted on their being imprisoned, the bishops, an other dignitaries of the sacred order, stood up, an with immense clamor called out, "Luther MUST B TAKEN OFF, and the propagators of his sentiments MUS be imprisoned!" But the German princes were not be soothed by the flatteries, nor to be overawed by th menaces of a Roman pontiff. They told the nunic they believed he had been ill informed respecting th conduct of the preachers of Nuremberg, who, in trut were at that moment held in high estimation by th people; and that therefore if any harsh measur should be adopted against them, there would soon be a general outcry, that a design was purposely formed to oppress the cause of truth, and this might lead to sedition and civil commotions.

Relative to the pope's complaints concerning Luther and his sect, they said in general, that they were always ready to do their utmost to root out heresies of every kind, but they had omitted to execute the edict of Worms for the most weighty and urgent reasons. It was a fact, that all ranks and orders made heavy complaints against the court of Rome, and were now, through Luther's various discourses and writings, so well convinced of the justice of these accusations, that any attempt, in the present juncture, to execute by force the late damnatory sentence of the pope and emperor, would inevitably be attended with the most dangerous consequences. The people would instantly interpret such a procedure as a certain prelude to the oppression of evangelical light and truth, and to the further maintenance of those impieties and abuses which could no longer be borne; and thus Germany would soon be involved in tumults, rebellion, and civil wars. The princes therefore could not but think that a trial ought to be made of expedients less inflammatory in their nature, and better suited to the circumstances.

They applauded the pope's pious intention to reform the court of Rome, which he had ingenuously owned to be the source of all the mischief. This was truly laudable; but there were moreover particular grievances and abuses, an account of which they purposed to exhibit in a distinct memorial; these required effectual redress: and, if not obtained, they knew it would be in vain to expect the eradication of errors, and the re-establishment of peace and harmony among the ecclesiastical and secular orders in Germany. As the pope had condescended to ask their advice, they said they would not dissemble in their answer. His holiness was by no means to imagine that the members of the diet had their eyes SOLELY on the business of Luther, but also on a multitude of other evils, which had taken deep root by long usage, and through the ignorance of some and the wickedness of others. For all these things, the most efficacious remedy which they could devise was, that the pope, with the consent of the emperor, should speedily appoint a free, godly, and christian council, to be held in some convenient part of Germany, as Strasburg, Mentz, or Cologne; and that full liberty should be granted to every member of it, ecclesiastical or secular, to speak and give advice, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Lastly, they promised that, in the mean time, they would request the elector of Saxony to interpose his authority, and prevent the Lutheran party from printing books, or preaching sermons, on subjects of a seditious tendency, and that, in general, they would do their utmost to confine the preachers, for the present, to the exposition of the plain, pure gospel of Christ, and make them wait for the determination of the future council respecting all doubtful, controversial matters. Also the bishops and the arch-bishops should appoint virtuous and learned men in their respective dioceses, to superintend the parochial clergy, whose business it should be to correct their errors and irregularities, as occasion required, with kindness and moderation; but by no means in such a manner as to excite just suspicion of a design to prevent the promulgation of christian truth. As to the priests who had married wives, or the monks who had left their convents, they conceived it sufficient if the ordinaries inflicted the canonical punishments on the offenders.—The civil laws had made no provision for such cases. But if these same refractory priests should be found guilty of any crimes of a different nature, then the prince or magistrate, in whose jurisdiction the offences were committed, should take care to enforce a due execution of the existing laws.

This answer of the diet was delivered in writing to the pope's legate, which he disapprobated in strong terms. He said, that neither his most holy master, nor the emperor, nor any christian prince, had ever expected to hear such language from the diet. Since the solemn condemnation of Luther, that incurable heretic had not only persevered in his old errors, but had also been guilty of many new transgressions. His punishment, therefore, ought not to have been lessened, but increased on that account. Their negligence in this matter was offensive to God, to the pope, and to the emperor. The reasons alleged by the diet in excuse, were by no means satisfactory: men ought to suffer any inconveniences rather than endanger the catholic unity and the salvation of souls. He therefore, most earnestly besought them, before the conclusion of their meeting, to agree upon the complete execution of the sentence against Luther.

The legate complained, that their having requested the pope by the consent of the emperor, to call a general council; that it should be free and be held in this or that city, and such like, had the appearance of tying up the hands of his holiness, and might give his holy master great umbrage. Moreover, the legate expressed much displeasure at their promise to prevent, as much as they could, the printing and vending of heretical books. "I say," said he, "on this point as I do of the rest, *the sentence of the pope and the emperor ought to be implicitly obeyed;* the books *should be burnt*, and *the printers and venders of them duly punished*. There is no other way to suppress and extinguish this pernicious sect. It is from the reading of their books that all these evils have arisen."

Lastly, he observed, that the answer of the diet concerning the married clergy, would not have displeased him, had they not observed that the secular princes or magistrates should take proper cognizance of the offenders. "Now," said he, "if by these words we are to understand that such offenders are to be punished by their proper ecclesiastical judges, it is very right; but if the explanation is, that they are to be tried by the secular jurisdiction, I do most earnestly desire the diet to correct this part of their answer, as being in principle, directly contrary to the rights of the church. The secular magistrates have no authority over those who are once under the dominion of Christ and the church; neither do those priests or monks, who have broken their vows, or have otherwise apostatized, cease, for that reason, to be still under the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

This reply of the pope's legate gave great offence in the diet. They saw that he was quick to discover what seemed to threaten a diminution of the papal authority and emolument, but that he was not disposed to relieve Germany from the grievous oppressions under which it labored. Instead, therefore, of multiplying words in the form of a long rejoinder, they informed Cheregato that they had business to transact of still greater consequence, and directed him to be content with their former resolution, till they could send a NATIONAL MEMORIAL to the pope, and receive the answer of his holiness respecting all their GRIEVANCES. It would then be seen what reliance ought to be placed on the fair promises of the nuncio of the Roman pontiff.

Cheregato thought proper to quit Nuremberg, before the memorial was drawn up. His sudden departure was considered disrespectful to the diet, and an indication of an unfavorable issue to the whole business.

The diet now proceeded to draw up their memorial, containing 100 articles of complaint. This they immediately dispatched to Rome, with a concise, but memorable protest to the following effect: that the diet had laid all their grievances before the legate of his holiness, and had intended to furnish him with an exact and orderly copy of them for the perusal of his master, but he had surprised them by his disappearing suddenly and unexpectedly: that they humbly besought the pope to redress their grievances effectually; and moreover wished his holiness to understand, that if they were not redressed, and speedily too, the burden of them had become so oppressive and insupportable, the princes and people in general neither COULD nor WOULD endure them any longer. Imperious necessity itself, and the iniquity of the multiplied extortions and oppressions under which they groaned, would compel them to use every method, with which God had entrusted them to deliver themselves from the tyranny of the ecclesiastics.

These transactions were a decisive proof of the declining power of the popedom, and of the hardy and daring spirit which had arisen among the German nations in support of their civil and religious liberties.

The diet concluded their complaints with observing, that they could specify more and still heavier oppressions, from which in equity they ought to be relieved; but they were disposed to say nothing of them, till it should appear, whether they were likely to obtain justice respecting those already enumerated.

It would be tedious to relate the 100 grievances at full length. They were all reducible to three heads; namely: Grievances or oppressions, tending to enslave the people; to rob them of their money; or to appropriate to the clergy the jurisdiction of the secular magistrate.

The transactions of the diet at Nuremberg, produced much discontent at Rome. The papal courtiers saw plainly that the pope's legate, to the diet, had effected nothing to the advantage of the Roman see; that the authority of the church was weakened; that the sources of its wealth were stopped; and that the heretics would doubtless become more daring and presumptuous than ever. Nor did they mistake in their anticipations. For, Luther and his disciples, in all their controversial writings after this period, often appealed to the testimony of Adrian, and to the 100 grievances enumerated by the representatives of the Germanic body, in confirmation of what they affirmed respecting the abuses and corruptions of the Romish court. Adrian died soon after he had received from his legate the account of what had passed at Nuremberg.

During these trying scenes the elector of Saxony and his court, had apprehended so much danger to Luther from the diet of Nuremberg, that they would gladly have persuaded him to have once more returned to his place of concealment. "No, no," said he, in a letter to Spalatinus, "imagine not that I will again hide myself in a corner, however madly the monsters may rage. I perfectly well remember, dear friend, what I wrote to the prince from Borna; and I wish you would all be induced to believe the contents of that letter. You have now had the most manifest proofs that the hand of God is in this business; for this is the second year in which, beyond the expectation of every one, I am yet alive; and the elector is not only safe, but also finds the fury of his brethren of the Germanic body less violent than during the preceding year. Our prince has not *designedly* involved himself in this religious contest; no; it is by the providence of God alone that he finds himself at all concerned in it; and Jesus Christ will have no difficulty to defend him. However, if I could, without actually disgracing the gospel, perceive a way of separating him from my difficulties and dangers, I would not hesitate to give up my life. I had fully expected and hoped, that, within the year, I should have been dragged to suffer death; and that was the method of liberating him from danger to which I alluded in my letter,—if indeed such would have been the consequence of my destruction. It appears very plain that at present we are not able to investigate or comprehend the Divine counsels; and therefore it will be the safest for us to say, in a spirit of humble resignation, "THY WILL BE DONE."

Thus did Luther, in the full conviction of the justice and importance of the cause which he supported, constantly look with a single eye to the protection of that Being, through whose providence he was made an honorable instrument of the revival of christian truth and liberty. He considered the triumph of the gospel as a sure event, and at no great distance; he rejoiced in the prospect of it; he had not the smallest anxiety on account of his own personal safety; and he labored to impress the mind of his prince with similar sentiments of pious expectation, confidence, and fortitude.

Duke George had recourse to management and artifice. During the sitting of the diet at Nuremberg, he refused to take his seat in the regency, alleging as a reason, that the princes, whom Luther, in his writings, had charged with the commission of high crimes, ought to prove themselves innocent before they were admitted to offices of trust and authority. His design, in thus having refused to take his seat, evidently was, that no member of the Germanic body, whatever might be his rank or title, should be allowed a just claim of precedence and sovereignty, while remaining either directly or indirectly under the BAN of the empire by the legitimate decision of the diet of Worms. Hereby he appears to have designed to introduce a resolution among the princes, that all persons proscribed by the edict of Worms should be deprived of their rights, privileges and possessions. This appears to have been a design of George to degrade and plunder his nephews Frederic and John.

The penetrating eye of Frederic foresaw the conspiracy which was then forming by the pope, the emperor, and several of the most bigoted of the German princes, with express intent of crushing the infant reformation, and also every power that was friendly to its progress. He saw that the powers of Antichrist were now roused, and had become outrageous; and had shown symptoms of an intention to collect their strength, and to act in concert, with more system and decision than they had hitherto done from the commencement of the ecclesiastical dissensions. From scruples of conscience he did not, however, dare to draw the sword in defence of himself and his subjects. But while the clouds seemed to be thickening over the elector and his subjects, they were soon dispersed, by the kind disposals of that overruling Providence, which in its secret counsels, had determined to break the rod of the oppressor, and to bestow on the nations the blessings of a revival of christian truth and christian liberty. The emperor was so much involved in his multiplied schemes of ambition, that he found it impossible to give any serious and durable attention to affairs in Germany; and it soon appeared, that without his active co-operation, the rest of the confederacy could effect nothing decisive. The patient, industrious reformers had now to struggle only with thei usual difficulties arising from the persecutions of sucl individuals as frequently happened to be the unfortunate victims of cruel bigots in possession of power Among the unrelenting tyrants of this class, was the archduke Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V. who wa so much inflamed with resentment against the Saxor reformer and his cause, that he declared he had mucl rather his sister, the queen of Denmark, had beer sunk in the depths of the sea, than that she should eve have conversed with Luther at Wittemberg.

The unfortunate queen was compelled to seek ar asylum out of Denmark, with her exiled husband Christiern II. who, in 1523, fled from Copenhagen witl 20 ships, with his queen and children, and all hi private treasure. In his passage to the continent h was overtaken by a violent tempest, which disperse his fleet, and reduced him to the last extremity. A length he arrived at Terrere in Zeeland, dispatched messenger to his brother-in-law, Charles V. and entertained the most sanguine hopes that, through the assistance of so powerful an ally, he should soon be restored to his former dignity and possessions. Hi queen Elizabeth came to Nuremberg, to implore th help of her brother Ferdinand and of the Germai princes. But unfortunately for this object, she ha received many of Luther's books from Albert, duk of Prussia, and had made an open profession of th reformed religion, and in 1524 had publicly receive the sacrament in both kinds. This last step so provoked Ferdinand, that he told her in plain terms, " h heartily wished she was not his sister." " Certainly," replied the queen, " we are descended from one an the same mother: nevertheless, I must adhere closel to the word of God, and to that ONLY without th least respect of persons; in all other concerns, I a ready to obey my brother's pleasure; and if, on tha account, he refuses to own me as his sister, I shall endeavor to bear the cross with patience." On th subject of her own calamitous situation, as well a that of her husband, she is said to have expressed herself so pathetically before the princes, as to have constrained every one present to shed tears. She obtained from them, however, no satisfactory promises of assistance; and this excellent queen soon after departed this life, her death being probably hastened by affliction and misfortune, and the unkind treatment of her nearest relations. She was buried at Ghent, and her husband informed Luther, that, notwithstanding the very great pains which had been taken, by persons of the greatest distinction to persuade her to return to popery, she had received the Lord's supper according to the just ordinance of Christ, and died in the exercise of sound and lively evangelical faith.

Denmark and Sweden were now uniting themselves to the cause of Protestantism. The religious revolutions in those kingdoms were brilliant and rapid, and were eventually productive of much spiritual good.

Frederic, duke of Holstein, succeeded his nephew Christiern II. in the throne of Denmark. Under him, and his successor, Christiern III. the blessed change of the religious establishment was completed in that kingdom.

In 1524, Frederic I. king of Denmark and duke of Holstein, made it a capital offence for any person to take away the life, or injure the property or dignity of another, on account of his religion, whether Papal or Lutheran. This prince allowed all his subjects so to conduct themselves as best to satisfy their own consciences before God. At the same time he ordered the most solemn and explicit directions to be given, that the errors of the Romish church should be publicly reprobated, and the evangelical doctrines of the reformers recommended to the people. But the inhabitants of Ditmarsen, an intractable race, refused to obey the king's edict, and committed to the flames Henry Muller, a zealous preacher of pure christianity. In other parts of Frederic's dominions the royal edict was dutifully obeyed, and proved a great bulwark against the violence and cruelty of the papists. Under its protection, the Lutheran ministers engaged and confronted their adversaries by the methods of fair argumentation; and were wonderfully successful in propagating Divine truth. Even some of the Roman champions acknowledged their convictions, and bowed to the authority of reason and scripture.

In Sweden, the renowned Gustavus Vasa, having in his youth lived an exile at Lubec, and there gained some information concerning the grounds of Lutheranism, and having afterward been further instructed by Laurentius and Olaus Petri, two disciples of Luther, no sooner saw himself in firm possession of the throne, than he determined to reform the church. Under his auspices a public disputation was held at Upsal, between Olaus Petri, on one side, in support of Luther's system, and Peter Galle, on the other, as defender of the papal dogmas; and the sum of their argumentations was afterward published. Also by the king's order, Andreas, his chancellor, was employed in translating the scriptures into the Swedish language; and no means were omitted for enlightening the people. The effects were rapid and decisive, and Sweden from that day has ranked invariably among the potestant nations.

A royal proclamation by Gustavus, in substance as follows, must have been extremely beneficial to the reformers. "We do not deny that our care is for the true religion founded on the word of God. There can be no better religion than that which Christ and his apostles have delivered to us. Here there is no place for dispute. But respecting certain ceremonies, questions are raised, and more especially respecting the privileges of the clergy. It is true that we find learned men are desirous of abolishing several useless external rites, but there is not the least ground for calumniating us, as though we wished to introduce any other religion than that which is truly christian. Our single aim is, to worship God in spirit and truth, and to become a partaker of the joys of heaven with all Christ's faithful servants. Let not our beloved subjects, therefore, listen to scandalous reports concerning their sovereign; but remain assured, that our thoughts are employed how we may best promote the glory of God and their eternal welfare. It is not long ago since we learnt what fraudulent means the Roman pontiff has employed to drain this kingdom of large sums of money, through the institution of private masses and indulgences. And in regard to other countries, men of the best information have proved, beyond contradiction, by what variety of deceitful methods the bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries make a gain of the simple; and how they burden wretched consciences, and multiply acts of hypocrisy. The luxurious prelates now see that these evil practices are detected and exposed, by persons of the greatest piety and knowledge; and therefore they set their faces against the truth with all their might, and cry out, *innovation and heresy!* but believe them not. We seriously exhort you to believe them not: for there is not one word of truth in their malicious accusations."

Let no one, however, conclude that this glorious triumph of religious truth took place without much clamor and opposition from the established hierarchy. Antichrist was seriously alarmed, and exerted his utmost powers to prevent the fall of his tottering pillars. The preceding proclamation sufficiently intimates this. In fact the dignified clergy, and their adherents in the convocation at Upsal, boldly maintained that no person under pain of excommunication and eternal damnation, could, on any account whatever, deprive the prelates of their wealth and privileges.

To this the king and the friends of the reformation coolly replied, "That true ministers of the church, especially those who diligently instructed the people, deserved more than a decent maintenance; they were worthy 'even of double honor,' but that the lazy and licentious drones, who neither served God nor man, ought to have no public stipend whatever: moreover, that there was not one syllable in the scriptures to justify that immense political power and revenue which the clergy had usurped, and which had enabled them, for some centuries past, to withstand their lawful governors, and disturb kingdoms with endless wars and seditions."

The contest was now advancing fast to a crisis. The monks and the rest of the papal clergy, observed no bounds in their resentment. Throughout Sweden, and also in foreign countries, they calumniated their excellent king as a heretic and unworthy of the throne. In Dalecarlia they even excited the people to seditious and treasonable practices; and because the kingdom happened then to suffer grievously from a great scarcity of corn, they taught the vulgar to believe that the present famine was a judgment of Almighty God on the country, for receiving the new religion. By such artifices of the bishops and priests, the inhabitants of many provinces became so disaffected to the government, that they refused to pay their annual taxes.

But the Swedish monarch had already done every thing in the cause of christian truth which could be expected from a pious, wise, and magnanimous prince. Like king David, he had begun with reforming his own court; and suffered none but religious characters to approach his person, or to fill the great offices of state. He had instituted a GENERAL VISITATION of the whole country BY HIMSELF, in which he was accompanied by evangelical preachers, and particularly by that excellent Lutheran theologian, Olaus Petri, whom he had previously appointed secretary of Stockholm. In adopting this admirable measure, the king had proposed to instruct his ignorant subjects in the great principles of the christian religion, and to guard them against erroneous notions concerning faith and works, and predestination; and also against the innumerable corruptions of the Romish church. Moreover, in the execution of it he had listened to the advice of the experienced German reformers not to hurt the tender consciences of the well-meaning but uninformed part of the people, by an over-hasty abolition of such ceremonies and superstitions, as might be suffered to remain without manifest impiety. This moderation had become the more necessary, because in

Sweden, as formerly in Germany, there had arisen, in he early part of the reformation, fanatics of the anabaptist class, who excited the people to the most outrageous acts of tumult and sedition. At Stockholm, they had entered the great church of St. John, and in the most audacious manner had removed, or broken to pieces, the organ, statues, and images therein; and their riotous example was followed throughout almost every part of the kingdom.

At this moment the situation of Sweden seems to have been truly critical. On the one hand, an enthusiastic zeal for innovation, and on the other, a blind attachment to superstitious ceremonies, inflamed the minds of many, and divided them into parties; and there was constantly at hand an active, ambitious, and powerful clergy, ready to take every advantage of these internal dissensions. It soon appeared, however, that, even in this perilous conjuncture, there existed in Gustavus a combination of qualities fully equal to the emergency.

This determined prince, in the summer of the year 527, at the convocation of Arosen, summoned together all the constituted orders, and authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, in his dominions, with the full purpose of bringing to speedy issue the important question concerning the regulation of the doctrines, the revenues, and the powers of the church. He directed the senators of the kingdom to be placed next to the throne, and the bishops next to the senators. The nobles occupied the third class, the parochial lergy the fourth, and the commons the fifth. This arrangement was an unpardonable offence in the eyes f the bishops; and the extraordinary measure which they instantly adopted in consequence, strongly marks the domineering spirit of the Roman catholic clergy, nd shows also how entirely regardless they were of bserving good faith with those who did not exhibit mplicit obedience to the papal system. They met secretly in the church of St. Giles, to deliberate on heir present situation. "What is to be done, my brethren?" said the bishop of Linkioping: "It is plain enough the king means to degrade us: he means to take from us those castles and fortified places which pious kings have of old granted to the bishops of this country; and probably his next step will be to deprive us of our lands and revenues." Two of the junior and more moderate bishops answered, "Let us not contes the matter with his majesty; for if we have no secula possessions, we cannot be called upon to contribute to the defence of the state." "This is a most serious business," replied the bishop of Linkioping: "if we make these concessions, we shall bring upon ourselves the indignation and eternal anathema of the Roman pontiff. Kings and emperors, in former times, have made similar attempts upon the property of the clergy, but were deterred from executing their designs by the dread of pontifical excommunication. Make your choice then, brethren, never to disobey the pope: he is the asylum of the church, and he will defend you." Every one present declared his firm resolution to defend the Roman pontiff and the established hierarchy; and they subscribed a solemn protes against any degradation of their dignity, or diminution of revenue. They then buried the writing unde a sepulchre, covered it with stones, and took a solemn oath not to reveal the secret. But it was dug up fi teen years afterwards, and shown to Gustavus, as proof of the treachery of the papal bishops, at the commencement of the reformation.

In the convocation at Arosen, Gustavus, throug his chancellor, complained heavily of the indolenc luxury and impiety of the superior clergy; and als of the excessive ill usage which he had personall received from the papal faction. They had everywhere represented him as a heretic, a teacher of nov doctrines, and as one who endeavored to dissemina among the people a corrupt religion. He had reprimanded, he said, the archbishop of Upsal for negle of duty, and, in particular, had ordered him to tak care that the Bible should be translated into the Swedish language; but that that prelate, instead of obeyin his directions, and reforming the abuses in the churc had maliciously excited tumults and seditions among his good subjects, afterwards plundered the inferior clergy, and at last fled with much wealth from his country. In brief, and agreeably to what he had stated in his proclamation, he wished the faithful, laborious clergy, to be well rewarded; at the same time that he would have the ignorant, the idle, and the useless, to be deprived of the revenues which they so undeservedly possessed, and which ought to be applied o the public service. If a speedy emendation to this effect was not agreed to by the bishops and senate, e would no longer undertake the government of the country. On this head, therefore, he required a clear and categorical answer.

Upon hearing the king's proposal, the convocation was almost in an uproar. The prelates, and other papal adherents, cried No! no! with the utmost clamor, and called loudly on the leading men of the country, o withstand such unjust innovations.

But the pious and disinterested Gustavus had formed a resolution, from which even the splendor of a crown could not induce him to depart. He came into the assembly, and there publicly resigned the government of the kingdom. With some warmth, but with great decency and firmness, he informed them hat he had made his choice, and that his conscience did not permit him to support a superstitious and depraved system of religion. He added, that he had etermined to leave the country, but expected them o pay him the price of his hereditary possessions.

The great body of the Swedish representatives, amely, the COMMONS in the convocation, were now so uch enraged at the conduct of the refractory bishops, s to signify to them in terms by no means obscure, hat, if they did not instantly comply with the pleasure of their beloved sovereign, they would soon feel he vengeance of the people inflicted on their obstinacy and disobedience. Moreover, that the reasonableness of the king's demand might be placed in the earest light, it was agreed that Peter Galle and Olaus etri should once more try their strength publicly,

in dispute, on the question of ecclesiastical power an
privilege, as they had formerly done on the controverted points of evangelical doctrine. The combatant
met accordingly; and Olaus Petri, the Lutheran disciple, spoke in the Swedish language; but the papa
advocate, P. Galle, persisted in the use of Latin, til
the whole audience exclaimed aloud, "Say what yo
have to say in the Swedish language!"

This free discussion had a mighty influence on al
the members of the convocation, except the most violent and determined partizans of popery, who on th
third day of the session were completely overpowere
with numbers. This memorable assembly conclude
its proceedings, by humbly beseeching Gustavus t
resume his government, and by precisely defining th
ecclesiastical privileges and revenues. Among thei
several regulations and decrees, published with th
king's signature, there is this clause: "No one sha
be ordained a clergyman, who is either unwilling t
preach, or who does not know how to preach the pur
word of God."

This curious and instructive account of the beginning of the reformation in Sweden, may well deserv
a place in these memoirs: and when it is considere
that the disciples of Luther were the chief instrument
of its success, it can scarely be deemed a digressio
from the subject of this chapter. It may be said, indeed, and with great probability of truth, that, under
prince of less pious dispositions and less splendid talents than those of the renowned Swedish monarch
the puny efforts of two or three evangelical teacher
could have availed but little against the whole weigh
and prevalence of the papal influence: but this is i
fact no more than to affirm, what no believer of a Divine Providence will deny, that, whenever the grea
Disposer of all events purposes either to visit mankin
with penal judgments, or bless them with merciful dispensations, he is INFALLIBLE in exactly proportionin
his means to those ends, which, in the depth and wisdom of his counsels, he has previously designed sha
surely come to pass.

The reformation in Sweden continued to proceed with vigor and discretion, under the protection of Gustavus Vasa, and principally through the advice of his secretary Olaus Petri, who, in the year 1529, published a more distinct explanation of the great christian doctrine of justification by faith, and also a new ritual in the Swedish language, in which the official rules for marriage, baptism, burial of the dead, and the administration of the Lord's supper, were very much cleared from Romish superstitions and incumbrances.*

" How delightful a spectacle to a true christian, to see distinctly, and, as it were, with his own eyes, a contest on the spot between Christ and Antichrist !" Such is the observation of a pious and excellent annalist, to whom we are indebted for much of the preceding information concerning the revival of evangelical doctrine throughout Europe in this period. " Whatever machinations," continues the same author, "either the pope or the emperor and his creatures devised for the purpose of obstructing the progress of CHRISTIAN TRUTH, Jesus Christ overruled them all, to the advantage and furtherance of the same. The bull of the pope, the thunder of the emperor, did not frighten men, but on the contrary animated them to embrace the gospel." In fact, the blessed reformation was spreading itself far and wide; and almost all the European nations hailed the dawn of truth, and exulted in the prospect of spiritual freedom.

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* The resolutions of the states assembled at Arosen, (or Westeraas, as it is otherwise called,) did not tend to fix or regulate many doctrinal articles, but rather to reduce the clergy to a more dependent condition. These, by repeated grants from a superstitious nobility, had become opulent, dissolute, and luxurious; and moreover they possessed so many castles and places of strength, that they were able, at any time, to excite dangerous commotions in the kingdom, and even to give laws to the sovereign himself. On the other hand, the men of rank and family were impoverished beyond example, through the rapacity of a devouring, insatiable hierarchy. It was in vain, therefore, until this enormous power of the numerous prelates, acting in concert with the Roman pontiff at their head, was restrained within moderate bounds, to expect any substantial reformation of the ecclesiastical establishment. When the edicts of Westeraas had settled this indispensable preliminary, and not before, Gustavus condescended to resume the sceptre, and bless his subjects with a purer religion.

The mixture of firmness and moderation displayed by this monarch, in all these transactions, is truly admirable. By imprisoning, and afterwards banishing, several of the disciples of Munzer, who had been convicted of committing riots at Stockholm, and by other instances of well-timed severity, he soon repressed the dangerous spirit both of fanaticism and sedition, which had disturbed the peace of the country. And further, by directing translations of the scriptures into the Swedish language to be every where dispersed among the people, he invited the most judicious part of his subjects to exercise their own judgments in religious concerns, and thus prepared their minds for the salutary emendations gradually introduced afterwards by Olaus into the formularies and confessions of the Swedish church. Lastly, though no specific system of doctrine was adopted at Westeraas, yet the mere provision of intelligent pastors, to preach throughout the kingdom the pure word of God to the people, in their native language, must have been found extremely efficient in promoting the same excellent purposes. Add to all this, that the progress of evangelical light and truth, through the different districts and provinces, had become abundantly more rapid, since Olaus, in the public disputation at Upsal, had gained so very signal a victory over his opponent P. Galle, the zealous defender of the ancient Romish corruptions.

In Hungary, even in the year 1522, the fame of the deliverance of various states and provinces from papal chains had excited in the minds of the people a most prodigious desire not only to become partakers of the pure reformed religion, but also to see Luther himself, from whose instructions they expected to derive, in the easiest and happiest way, the best system of heavenly doctrine, and also the wisest method of cultivating sacred learning. Among the young students who came from this country to Wittemberg, with the intention of consulting Luther and hearing his lectures, Martinus Cyriac is particularly mentioned as the first who appears from the academical registers to have been matriculated in this year, when Philip Melancthon was rector or provost of the university.

Lewis, the king of Hungary and Bohemia was a bitter enemy of the reformers; but Divine Providence raised them up an excellent and powerful patron in George marquis of Brandenburg. This illustrious prince began about the same time to discover a relish for evangelical knowledge; and as he was grand-master of the royal household, he had frequent opportunities of softening or entirely doing away the charges and complaints which were frequently laid before the king against the disciples of Luther. Under his auspices, and those of the dukes of Lignitz and Munsterberg, a considerable reformation took place among the churches in Silesia, and particularly at Breslaw, the capital city of that country; and it appears that in the succeeding year the inhabitants of these regions were blessed with an additional influx of the salutary and refreshing beams of the light of the gospel.

It would be inexcusable to omit, in this history of the church of Christ, a short, but precious fragment of biography relative to John Thurzo, bishop of Breslaw in Silesia. This good prelate was descended from a noble family in Hungary, and is said to have been the very first papal bishop who in his diocese was favorable to the revival of pure christianity.

The very little that is known of Thurzo is to be collected from a concise epistle of Luther, and another still more concise of Melancthon, addressed to him so early as the year 1520. He did not live to receive either of them; and Luther, on the occasion of his decease, says in a letter to a friend, "In this faith died John Thurzo bishop of Breslaw, of all the bishops of this age the very best."

Luther, in his letter to the dying prelate, expressed his feelings thus: "Not only myself, but the church of God, very much sympathises with you, reverend father, in your present sickness. For it is a lamentable truth, both that there are now actually few SUCH bishops, and, also, that there never existed a greater need of them. However, I have a good hope, that the hand which has inflicted your malady, will itself heal you; and that HE, who has furnished you, reverend father, with such extraordinary gifts, will enable you to go through all the trials, to which his holy will shall call you, with a firm christian spirit, and like a faithful bishop. But if the church must be deprived of you, then may HE, who is all powerful to promote the good of his faithful people, whether it be by your life or your death, be pleased to bless the event to their profit, according to the riches of his good will. I do not write this on the supposition of its being necessary to strengthen you in the Lord; though indeed who is so strong as not to need sometimes the help even of his weakest brother? but from a belief in that communion of saints ordained by Christ, which makes all the faithful, partakers both of the blessings and of the burdens of each other. Thus, reverend father, your sickness, or, if it so please God, your death, is to be considered as a common evil; yet on the other hand it is a delightful reflection, that WE suffer or rejoice with you, and that Jesus Christ also, who is ever in the very centre of our hearts, rejoices with us all when we rejoice, and when we suffer, is touched with our infirmities. Your former letters afforded me great satisfaction; they are full of charity and humility."

Melancthon's letter to Thurzo does not advert to the bishop's ill state of health, but contains the following passage: "Who is there that does not think highly of the man, who, as far as I know, is the only person in Germany, that by his authority, learning, and piety, has exhibited an example of what a bishop ought to be? If the christian world could but enumerate ten characters of this stamp, or, as it is in Homer, of this spirit and way of thinking, I should not doubt of seeing the kingdom of Christ again restored."

The pious Thurzo died in August, 1520; but the reformation does not appear to have suffered materially from this loss. His successor, James of Saltza, trode in his steps. This bishop appointed, with the entire approbation of the inhabitants, John Hesse of Nuremberg, who was a learned doctor of divinity, and a dear friend of Luther, to preach the gospel in the church of St. M. Magdalen at Breslaw. Hesse not only explained and enforced the great truths of christianity from the pulpit, but for eight days together, in a public disputation, defended the same, and exposed the papal dogmas concerning the mass and the celibacy of the clergy. The name of Ambrose Moiban is mentioned as his co-adjutor in preaching, and that of Valentine Trocedorf in the disputation. The report of these proceedings was as agreeable to Luther as it proved vexatious to the pope. The latter was so much out of humor with the magistrates at Breslaw, on account of their late ecclesiastical appointments, and their protection of the novel doctrines, that he wrote a letter to them full of censures and menaces. This however had no other effect than to induce them to defend their conduct in a printed apology, which contains a most lively description of the corrupt manners of their former pastors, as well as of the wretched state of the ecclesiastical government in general. Thus happily proceeded the reformation in Silesia. In defiance of the pope, the senate and the inhabitants of Breslaw retained and supported John Hesse in the pastoral office to which they had chosen him; and he died after having discharged the ministerial office in the same city during the space of twenty-five years. Moreover, about the same time was established in the duchy of Lignitz a school of considerable reputation, the preceptors and governors of which had all been educated in the university of Wittemberg.

The cross however,—the constant attendant, in some shape or other, of true religion,—was now severely felt by Lutherans, in every place where papal enmity had an opportunity of exerting itself with effect. Lewis king of Hungary and Bohemia, not content with making formal complaints to the elector of Saxony of the patronage afforded by that prince to the arch-heretic Luther, inflicted great severities on such of his own subjects as received the protestant tenets. His principal agent in this business was the bishop of Olmutz. Then in Misnia and Thuringia the unrelenting George of Saxony labored to extirpate evangelical truth by imprisonment, fines, banishment, and at length by capital punishments. Even his brother Henry, duke of Friberg, who had shown some symptoms of goodwill to the reformers, overawed by this determined persecutor, ejected from his house and the company of his duchess three ladies of noble birth, merely because they had been guilty of reading Luther's books. Similar cruelties were practised in other parts, particularly at Miltenberg; the protestants of which town are said to have been the first who were exposed to the violence of the military on account of their religion. John Draco, their pastor, fled to save his life; and Luther wrote to his afflicted congregation an admirably consolatory letter, in which he declares, that it would soon appear that if in one place the doctrine of the word was oppressed, it would rise again in ten others. It grieved him, he said, exceedingly, that those who approved his sentiments should be called Lutherans rather than lovers of the gospel; nevertheless the doctrine would stand whether he lived or died, or however the adversaries might rage; yet he owned that the progress of the true faith met with melancholy impediments from the want of practical godliness, and particularly of the spirit of prayer.

But the persecution in Flanders was the most ferocious. There Aleander, armed with the authority of the pope, and supported by the united power of the inquisition and of the civil government, exercised the vengeance of the hierarchy without mercy. The writings of Luther had infected the Augustinian monks at Antwerp. Some of them were imprisoned and recanted; but three, in spite of persuasion, threats, and long confinement, remained steady. These were publicly stript of their holy orders, and declared heretics, on a scaffold at Brussels, about the middle of the year 1523.

Two of the three, viz. Henry Voes and John Esch, cheerfully underwent the fiery trial on the same day, testifying a wonderful constancy. As they were led to the stake, they cried with a loud voice that they were christians; and when they were fastened to it, and the fire was kindled, they rehearsed the Creed, and after that sang the verses alternately of Te Deum laudamus* till the flames deprived them of voice and life.—Voes confessed before the inquisitors, that he had been brought to the knowledge of the gospel by Luther's writings. "What," said they, "has Luther the spirit of God?" No reply.—"You are seduced by Luther:" "I am seduced," answered Voes, "in the same manner as the apostles were by Christ."

This was the first blood that was shed in the Low Countries in the cause of religion, since the rise of Luther. The two martyrs exhibited, throughout the conflict, astonishing proofs of piety, patience, and constancy. The whole is finely described by a very learned person who was an eye-witness of their sufferings.

The name of the third was Lambert, who, according to Luther, received the crown of martyrdom in like manner at the stake, four days after. Erasmus says, he was taken back to prison, and there PRIVATELY despatched. This author, who certainly hated these abominable cruelties of the papists, observes upon the occasion, that Brussels had been most perfectly free from heretics till this event; but that many of the inhabitants, immediately after, began to favor Lutheranism.

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* Thee God we praise.

In fact, the modest deportment, together with the unshaken fortitude of the sufferers, made a great impression on the public mind. The martyrs were deemed innocent, and the judges, who had condemned them, unjust and cruel. The friars, to counteract the effect of such dangerous sentiments, circulated every where, in their sermons, and their conversation, a ridiculous story, that the souls of these holy men were saved through the intercession of the Virgin Mary; that one of them had appeared since his death, and revealed this important information; affirming at the same time, that in their very last moments they had repented and abjured the heresies of Luther. Though some color might be given to this fable from the circumstance of the bloody scene having taken place on the first of July, the day before the Visitation of the blessed Virgin, yet the people rejected the imposture with contempt. The persons who stood nearest to the martyrs denied the fact; and so did the executioner himself, when the question was put to him whether they had discovered any marks of penitence.

Luther, in memory of these faithful servants of God, composed a Latin hymn, which has been much used in the protestant churches. He likewise dispersed a circular letter among the brethren in Holland, Brabant, and Flanders; in which he says, "Blessed be God, we, who have hitherto been worshipping idols celebrated by men of a pretended sanctity, have seen and heard of real saints and martyrs in our own age. These two precious souls, Henry Voes and John Esch, counted their lives as nothing worth, provided by their deaths the gospel trumpet of Christ alone might be resounded more fully and clearly. What a slight matter is it to be ignominiously treated, and even put t death by men of this world! a slight matter indeed t those who are persuaded that their blood is preciou in the sight of the Lord. We of the Upper Germany have not yet been so far honored as to suffer death fo the name of Christ, though some of us have lived and still live in a state of persecution. Now is the time that the kingdom of heaven should show itself, not in speech but in power. The scripture abounds with glorious promises which are to support us in the present tribulation. Take courage. He, who cannot lie, hath declared that the very hairs of our heads are numbered. And though our enemies may call these holy martyrs Hussites, Wickliffites, and Lutherans, and boast of their bloody deeds, we are not to stand amazed, but to grow stronger in the faith. It cannot be but the cross of Christ must have its bitter enemies, and impious calumniators. The Judge however is at the door, and will soon pronounce a very different sentence.

The beginnings of an evangelical revival in so important a kingdom as France deserve to be noticed. But as the Helvetic and Calvinistic denomination soon prevailed there above the Lutheran, our present narrative has no further concern with it, than to show the extensiveness of the Lutheran reformation, which doubtless had great influence in the production of christian piety in that country.

In the city of Meaux, Faber, Favel, and a few others, during the year 1523, had begun to sow the seeds of pure christianity; and they appear to have been favored by their bishop, William Brissonet. Him Francis I. king of France, rebuked severely, for having countenanced these novel teachers. William withdrew his protection from the reformers, and promised to banish them from the country. Faber fled to Nerac in Gascony, and was supported by Margaret, the king's sister. Favel found an asylum in Switzerland, espoused the tenets of Zuingle, and afterward assisted Calvin in his pastoral labors at Geneva.

In the same city and year, John Clark, a mechanic was scourged unmercifully, and burnt in the forehead with an ignominious mark, for his having fixed, on the door of the cathedral, a paper, in which he called the pope Antichrist, and expressed his sentiments against papal indulgences. His mother no sooner saw him, than she bade him take courage, and exclaimed, "Live Jesus Christ, live the cross!" John repaired to the city of Metz, where he spent his days in earning his subsistence by his trade, and his nights in teaching the doctrine of Luther. In the year following, his zeal having led him to destroy some images, which the superstitious inhabitants intended to worship the next day, his hand was first cut off, his nose was torn with pincers, from his face, and his breasts and arms were, with the same instrument, separated from his body.—During his most excrutiating torments, he cried, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands."—He was then consumed by burning.

As the terms Helvetic and Calvinistic denomination have been mentioned, it may not be improper to state, that in the origin of these denominations, as distinguished from the Lutheran, there really existed no material difference of sentiment, as to the great doctrines of the cross. A tedious and violent controversy, however, arose between them concerning the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist. This dispute, which has been called the sacramental contest, after having produced the most deplorable animosities, terminated in a fatal division of those sincere friends of reformation, who had embarked in the same cause, and who equally possessed the essentials of godliness.

Luther had rejected the papal doctrine of transubstantiation, but insisted that with the elements of bread and wine the real body and blood of Christ were received by the partakers of the Lord's supper. Carolstadt, although in this point the open antagonist of Luther, was, in much of his conduct, from time to time, very injudicious and enthusiastic, yet as to his ideas of the Lord's supper he was correct and scriptural. He failed, however, in his attempts to support the true doctrine of the sacrament, by his arguments, though rational, perspicious and well digested.

The pertinacity, with which Luther adhered to his sentiment in this sacramental dispute, is a memorable instance of human imbecility, and shows that it is never wise to adhere implicitly to the authority of mere fallible men as teachers.

Carolstadt had, by his intemperate conduct, so sunk his reputation at Wittemberg, that he found it expedient to retire to Orlamund, in Saxony, where, without legitimate appointment, he became with the consent of the people their pastor. There he not only soon broached his new sentiment concerning the eucharist, but also raised new disturbances by his furious discourses concerning the abolition of images. He appears also to have boasted of having been favored with supernatural communications; and was represented as a partizan of the turbulent fanatic, Thomas Munzer. The university of Wittemberg summoned him to return and discharge in person the ordinary duties enjoined him by the statutes in their school and church. Carolstadt promised to obey, provided he could obtain the leave of his parishoners, the Orlamundians, whom, however, he is said to have excited to arrogate to themselves the divine right of appointing their own pastor. The elector of Saxony was so disgusted with the insolent letters which they wrote on this occasion, treating the academical claim as a papistical encroachment, that he peremptorily commanded both them and their teacher to submit to the legal authority of the university and the chapter. He likewise ordered Luther to visit Orlamund, and inquire into the truth of the various reports, and endeavor to appease the people. When he reached that place, the inhabitants treated him with so much warmth and abuse, that he congratulated himself with having fortunately escaped with his life.

Carolstadt still continued at Orlamund, and wrote letters to the elector full of bitter accusations against Luther; and instigated his hearers to do the same, teaching them to defend in their letters their late conduct in pulling down images. By such violent proceedings, the patience, both of the elector and his brother, was so far exhausted, that they expelled Carolstadt from their territories, and rejected the intercession of the Orlamundians on his behalf.

Carolstadt repaired to Strasburg and thence to Basle, where he procured the printing of several of his pamphlets on the sacrament.

In regard to his banishment, Luther thus writes to the Strasburgians: "Moreover, I really rejoice that he has been banished from our part of the country; and I most earnestly wish that he had no opportunity of showing his wild and seditious spirit among you. However, I own, that if I had been duke of Saxony, Carolstadt would never have been banished, unless, indeed, I had been compelled to yield to the importunate petitions of the people. But, my dear friends, do not ye be influenced by my indiscreet, nay foolish good nature; do ye act like wise men. Perhaps I may be imprudent enough to write on the points in dispute, though I am entirely convinced that the devil contrives to sow these seeds of controversy among men, for the express purpose of making them talk and write, and say, What excellent, holy men are these! What wicked, bad characters are those! and thus he takes up or deludes the minds of all sides by such novelties, and makes them forget the great articles of faith and practice. Let every one of you for himself sedulously study the true nature of the law, of the gospel, of faith, of Christ's kingdom, of christian liberty, of charity and patience; also the nature of human constitutions, and many things of this kind which are found necessary throughout the whole christian life; and then you will not be found blamable or deficient; though you should have thrown down no images. I would, my brethren, that your preachers, would endeavor to draw men as much as possible from Luther, and from Carolstadt; that is, from MEN, and lead them to Christ, the gift of God, who is freely made to us wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification.

These mad prophets have never understood, have never experienced this matter. They boast of hearing distinct voices from heaven, and of leading lives most extraordinarily pure; they use pompous and even marvellous expressions, which they themselves do not comprehend; and in this way they disturb restless consciences, and compass their purpose, which is to be looked up unto, and to excite astonishment; but in the mean time, Christ is forgotten or treated with contempt. My good brethren, entreat Almighty God the Father, to preserve you from temptation; and, of his inexhaustible mercy, to carry on his own work in your souls. This, through our Savior Jesus Christ, is my most fervent prayer, and it is the prayer that comforts me. These prophets, I am persuaded, do not pray for the success of their plans. A man cannot pray without some degree of a good conscience; but the system of these men originated in impiety and presumption; and they are still carried away with ambition and enthusiasm, and are not aware of the disgrace and ignominious end that awaits them."

After Carolstadt had been exiled about five months, he wrote a sort of penitential letter to Spalatinus, requesting his interference and good offices, to procure a reconciliation with Luther. Luther petitioned the elector to permit Carolstadt to re-enter his dominions, but his petition was rejected.

Carolstadt now wandered through higher Germany till he came to Rottenburg, where he invited the people to tumults and to pull down the statues and paintings. Shortly after this, when the seditious faction of the peasants, with Munzer their ring leader, was effectually suppressed, Carolstadt was in great danger, from his supposed connexion with the enthusiastic rebels, who had spread much devastation through Germany, and escaped, by being let down by a wall in a basket. Thus reduced to the last extremities, he and his wife incessantly entreated both the elector and Luther, that they might be allowed to return into their own country. He said, he could clear himself of having had any concern in the late rebellion; and if not, he would cheerfully undergo any punishment that could be inflicted upon him. With this view, he wrote a little tract, in which he took much pains to acquit himself from the charge of sedition. And he also sent a letter to Luther begging his assistance in publishing the tract, and in the more general design of establishing his innocence.

The generous feelings of Luther were so touched with the submissive application of an adversary in distress, that he immediately published Carolstadt's letter, and called on the magistrates and the people to give a fair hearing to an unfortunate fugitive, who pleaded NOT GUILTY, and challenged inquiry.

After much importunate entreaty, Luther succeeded in procuring from the elector John, a safe conduct for the return of Carolstadt into the territories from which he had been exiled. Carolstadt, it seems, was recalled about the autumn of 1525, and then made a public recantation of what he had advanced on the sacrament; and in the succeeding November, we find him transmitting to the elector a written formula for the same purpose.

There is good reason to hope that Carolstadt profited by adversity, and became more truly christian in his temper, during the latter part of his life. There is also, good reason to believe that Luther was sincere, notwithstanding his incorrect ideas in this sacramental controversy. It is to be lamented that his strong mind did not comprehend the true scriptural idea of the eucharist in all its parts. He avowed most conscientiously, regardless of consequences, whatever he believed to be true. Excessive veneration for the word of God, taken according to its literal meaning; "This is my body," prevented him, in this instance, from successfully exercising his judgment to obtain a rational interpretation of the meaning of scripture.

It was near the close of 1523 when Clement VII. was placed in the papal chair by very uncanonical means. Dreading the scrutiny of an assembly, which might terminate in the annihilation of his authority; he made choice of cardinal Campeggio, an able and artful negociator, as his nuncio to the diet of the empire, again assembled at Nuremberg. He arrived at that place about the beginning of March 1524. On his arrival, the emperor's brother Ferdinand reproached the senate of Nuremberg for their attachment to Lutheranism, and exhorted them to adhere to the ancient religious system; but they replied with firmness that they must not desert the truth.

Clement had instructed his legate to use his utmost endeavors to procure the execution of the edict of Worms; to counteract every measure which tended to the appointment of a general council, and the redress of the German grievances: He even instructed him TO PRETEND, that, in consequence of the decease of the late pope, and the sudden departure of his nuncio from Nuremberg, the catalogue of the German grievances had never been regularly received at Rome; and thus to decline making any definite answer to such indecent and unreasonable demands.

Campeggio, both before and during his conferences with the diet, labored incessantly IN PRIVATE with the members of that assembly to accomplish the purposes of his mission. In the public meetings he harangued in a most plausible strain concerning the paternal compassion of the pope for the present situation of the country, and his own inclinations to peace and moderation; at the same time he expressed astonishment that so many great princes could tolerate the late mischievous innovations in religion, and the abolition of those rights and ceremonies in which they and their ancestors had been educated.

The diet, having listened to a number of unmeaning promises and declarations, desired to know the pope's intentions respecting the methods which, in the preceding year, they had proposed to Cheregato for restoring the peace of the church; and also, whether the legate was charged with any satisfactory answer to the MEMORIAL of grievances which they had sent to Rome:

Campeggio replied, that he knew of no plan devised by them for composing the religious differences, except the edict of Worms. That edict, though approved by the emperor, and sanctioned by the general consent, had not been obeyed; and the execution of it ought, in his judgment, to be the first object of their deliberations. As to the memorial of grievances, he allowed that three copies of it had found their way to private persons at Rome, and that one of them had fallen into his own hands; but that the pope and cardinals considered it as the production of a private person, and by no means of the German princes. He had no instructions about it. There were articles in it which even bordered upon heresy; and the publication of them was highly disrespectful to the Roman see.

Charles V. having sent his ambassador to the diet, to gain the pope to his own interest, warmly seconded Campeggio in his complaints against the German princes for their lenity toward the disciples of Luther. The diet promised to observe the edict of Worms AS FAR AS THEY COULD, renewed their demands of a general council, and appointed the 11th of the November following, for a new assembly of the states of the empire, who should meet at Spires and make temporary regulations of all matters in dispute, until the council could be summoned. The words, *as far as they could*, were highly displeasing to the papal party; and were construed to imply that they would do nothing in obedience to that edict. But though the majority of votes was against the execution of the edict of Worms, yet such were the clamors of the prelates, and the menaces of the emperor's ambassador, that they carried along with them the princes, and prevailed by authority where they had failed in numbers. The lower orders and states of the empire protested publicly against these irregularities. The envoy of the elector of Saxony complained that the edict of Worms was obtained by a manœuvre of the bishops against the sense of the diet, and stated how dangerous it would be to the public peace to attempt to execute that edict by force.

When the emperor Charles V. heard of the resolution of the assembly at Nuremberg, relative to the contemplated assembly at Spires, he could not abstain from intemperate and acrimonious language, and declared that it belonged to himself and the pope, to call councils, and to fix on the place where they should meet. He absolutely forbade the princes to assemble at Spires, and enjoined the strictest observance to the edict of Worms. He called Luther a PROFANE SAVAGE, who, like Mahomet, was aiming at great power by poisoning men's minds with the contagion of his agreeable doctrines.

At Rome, the news of the edict of Nuremberg produced both alarm and astonishment. Clement, regarding the intended assembly at Spires as a new ecclesiastical tribunal, erected to oppose his pontificial authority, instantly summoned his cardinals to adopt measures to prevent so dangerous an innovation. The conclave directed Campeggio to collect in Germany all the princes, bishops, and others who adhered to the papal cause; to give them fair promises respecting a future council; to assure them that their grievances should be redressed at Rome; and to conjure them, to prevent, if possible, the discussion of any articles of religion at Spires. Also, he was directed to endeavor, through the influence of the emperor, to retard the meeting of that assembly, or, if he could, hinder it altogether.

Luther received the decree of the diet of Nuremberg with very little satisfaction, and caused it to be printed with the edict of Worms, to which he added many vehement and severe observations of his own. He treated those who thought of executing that edict, as men who had lost their senses, and were as absurd as the giants who made war against heaven. "These two decrees," adds Luther, "promulgated nearly at the same time, are impudent and disgraceful instances of fraud, falsehood, and contradiction. Alas! that princes of the christian name should have recourse to such detestable measures! Unhappy Germans, who have endured, for so many years, the abominable haughty yoke of insulting pontiffs, and yet take no pains to shake it from your necks! What? after having been pillaged so often, and exhausted of the very marrow of your bones, will no prayers, admonitions, or remonstrances move you to take care of yourselves, but you must employ all your vengeance upon such a poor wretch as Luther? Go on, if it must be so; here am I; I shall not run away. I shall resign my life most willingly, and emigrate to my eternal inheritance whenever it shall please God to pronounce my hour to be come. However, the same Omnipotent Being, who against hope, has preserved my life, during the space of almost three years, from the cruelty of my enemies, can still preserve it; though indeed I have no great desire to live.

"Through the Divine goodness I am less alarmed at the thought of death than I used to be; but let those, who would destroy me, reflect whether my blood may not leave a stain which neither they nor their children shall be able to wash away. God will not be mocked; and ye know not but he may be pleased to ordain that the murder of Luther should be followed by the heaviest national calamities."

The papal confederacy met at Ratisbon, and was managed by Campeggio. It was, however, an event, of which neither that artful legate, nor his more artful master in the Romish conclave, seems to have foreseen the consequences. For, while they were flattering themselves with having cemented a league of the most powerful supporters of the ancient ecclesiastical system, they forgot that they were giving the signal for an avowed and permanent disunion among the various potentates and orders of Germany. Those who were in this confederacy, comprehended but a small part of the imperial states. They assumed the right of making general orders for the many, but had neglected matters of the greatest importance to the community: they had done nothing to remove the real and principal grievances so long complained of, nor had they applied to the less abuses their true remedies.

It was this view of the proceedings at Ratisbon which roused the much more numerous imperial deputies who favored Lutheranism, to form soon after a similar convention at Spires, where in opposition to their papal adversaries, they explained the decrees o Nuremberg in favor of growing protestantism.

The Ratisbon party feeling that the dignity and authority of the popedom was manifestly at stake, bribed the two dukes of Bavaria, who had hitherto permitted the sale of Luther's books in their dominions, t proscribe them, and to obstruct the further progress o his doctrines.

The doings of the convention at Spires were in general truly laudable and patriotic, favorable to national liberty, and to the establishment of a pure and reformec religion.

This division of Germany into two parties, thoug it weakened the force of the empire, and laid the foundation of many incurable suspicions and jealousies was, under Providence, very favorable to the progress of the reformation. Luther's personal security at Wittemberg was increased. But the Roman pontiff anc the emperor had made two vain attempts at Nuremberg for the execution of the edict of Worms. Anc the last diet had manifested that they could not observe or enforce that edict. But the personal safet of Luther was very little to him compared with th satisfaction which he derived from hearing multipliec delightful accounts of the success of the gospel in va ious parts, during the disputes in Germany.

About the middle of this year, the landgrave o Hesse, enlightened by Luther's writings, began t profess a decided approbation of the reformed religion In a public proclamation he enjoined his preachers t confine themselves to the clear simple doctrine of ou Savior and his apostles. Ferber, a Franciscan monk now undertook to reclaim the landgrave to the catholi faith, by putting into his hands what he called an approved treatise on religion, and by exhorting him t imitate the kings and princes in Italy, France, anc Spain, who had agreed to inflict exemplary punishment on the Lutherans. The good landgrave replied that he had read the book, but found little in it whic accorded with the charitable spirit of a true christian that he had no design to leave ancient customs whic were founded in scripture; that he could not agree with the monk in denying the doctrine of justification by faith alone, because the words of scripture were express on that head: moreover, that he highly disapproved of his representing the Virgin Mary as a mediator between God and men, and the gospel as that which ought not to be preached to the common people; both which points, he said, were directly contrary to the written word.

Albert, marquis of Brandenberg, was at the late diet at Nuremberg, where, as grand master of the Teutonic order, he ranked next to the German archbishops. He had conversed with Luther and read his books with attention, and after the solution of certain doubts which the marquis had proposed to him, respecting the pontifical jurisdiction, Albert became an open and avowed defender of the reformation. Prussia soon felt the happiest effects from the operation of Albert's religious sentiments. In that kingdom, a substantial change, both in doctrine and practice, commenced under his protection and encouragement, which progressed with success and rapidity. George de Polentz, bishop of Samland, so much distinguished himself by his evangelical exertions, that he may be truly called the father of the reformation in that country. He probably was the first prelate who ventured to recommend to his clergy the study of Luther's writings. "Read," says he, "with a pious and diligent spirit the translation of the Old and New Testaments, by that most famous divine Doctor Martin Luther."

The fanatical practices of Thomas Munzer and his connexions have already been mentioned. The pretensions of these men, who were called Celestial Prophets, greatly perplexed and almost confounded, not only the elector and his court, but also the whole university of Wittemberg, with Melancthon at their head. The prophets boasted of having conversations with the Almighty. Munzer could not, however, be induced to come to Wittemberg, but remained at Alsted, a town, on the confines of Thuringia, in the electorate of Saxony. There he inveighed against the pope and Luther. "The doctrine of the latter," he said, "was no sufficiently spiritual, it was indeed altogether carnal Divines should exert their utmost endeavors to acquire a spirit of prophecy, otherwise their knowledge of divinity would not be worth one half-penny. They should consider their God as at hand, and not afar off Moreover, if men would be saved, they must fast, look grave, talk little, and wear plain clothes, and let their beards grow. This is the cross of Christ, and the true mortification. Then, thus prepared, they should leave the crowd, and think continually of God, and demand a sign of him by which they may know certainly that he has a regard for them, and that Christ died for them. If the sign does not appear at the moment, they should persevere, and be instant in prayer; and even expostulate with God, as though he did not keep his promises made in scripture. "An angry expostulation of this sort," he said, "demonstrated the fervor of the soul, and was highly pleasing to God; and would not fail in the end to produce some very conspicuous and satisfactory declaration of the divine will." "Dreams," he maintained, "were a method in which God revealed his will to men, and it was through the means of them, that in general, answers to prayers were to be expected." Then, if any person had a dream which admitted of an interpretation, instead of preaching to the people, Munzer made a labored eulogium on the dreamer: and, in this manner, he conciliated to himself a number of the inhabitants of Alsted, who entered into a conspiracy with him, subscribed their names and took a solemn oath, for the express purpose of murdering all wicked persons, appointing new princes and magistrates, and organizing the world afresh; and upon such a plan, that pious and good people only should have the upper hand. The enthusiast declared, that for all this, he had the positive command of God.

So long as the proceedings of this wicked incendiary were confined to the interpretation of dreams and supposed revelations from God, the mild Frederic so far tolerated his extravagant pretensions, as not to drive him into exile. But as soon as his seditious designs became sufficiently plain, he judged it necessary to give directions for his removal from the electorate. Munzer, having retired to Nuremberg, was quickly expelled by the inhabitants. Thence he proceeded to Mulhausen, where he had more success. He became a minister of the common people, and excited them to degrade the old magistrates and elect new ones; to turn the monks out of doors, and seize their houses and property. The very best and richest house fell to the share of Munzer himself, who had now become both the first ecclesiastic and first magistrate of the place. He decided all points in a summary way by the bible, or by inspiration, and taught the doctrine of perfect equality, and of a community of goods. The poor ceased to labor, and supplied their wants from the rich by force. The number of this deluded rabble increased in a most astonishing manner; their infatuated leader became every day more insolent, and persuaded himself that the time for carrying his detestable designs into execution was fast advancing.

Luther, it should seem, by his letters to the elector of Saxony, certainly at first promoted that good prince's spirit of patient forbearance towards Munzer. "Your highness," says he, "had better bear with him till he be more ripe. There is a great deal in him which has not shown itself as yet:" In this same letter, however, he calls Munzer, Satan, and intimates with sufficient plainness that he expected nothing but mischief from him in future. Moreover, afterwards, he became dissatisfied with the elector's dilatory indecision respecting the whole business of the prophets; and at length, when Munzer had unfolded his wicked purposes so as to leave no room for doubt, he presented to the prince Frederic, and to the duke his brother, a very spirited and elaborate address on the danger with which the country was threatened from this fanatical rebel and his deluded associates.

He begins like an apostle. "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;" and then proceeds to observe, that "it is Satan's method to attempt to crush every revival of the Divine word, first by force, and, if that does not succeed, then by false spirits, by artful and mischievous teachers. It WAS so in the first ages of the propagation of the gospel: He deluged christendom with the blood of the martyrs. But this did not answer his purpose; he therefore sent forth a tribe of false prophets and filled every corner of the world with heresies, till at length the papacy, that most powerful of all the antichrists, fully completed his designs. IT IS so at this very time. The pope, the emperor, kings, and princes, and wicked bishops, like madmen, rage against the gospel, and do their utmost to oppress it. Satan, however, is sufficiently acute to see that they will not prevail, but will bring down the divine wrath upon themselves; and in the mean time he produces lying spirits and abandoned secretaries to do his business.

"The same satanic spirit" continued Luther, "after wandering through dry places for almost three years, seeking rest and finding none, has at length taken advantage of the protection afforded by your highnesses' mild and peaceful government, and hath built his nest in your territories at Alsted, with a view to commence war against us who preach the gospel.

"Nevertheless, it is my singular satisfaction to find that these madmen openly boast that they do not belong to us; and that they have neither learnt nor received any thing from us, but have been conversing with God for the space of three years. They reckon little of our teaching faith, charity, and the cross, at Wittemberg. "You must hear," say they, "the voice of God itself." And if scripture be appealed to, they instantly cry Babel, Babel, Babel! moreover, these miserable men have such a degree of pride and positiveness as I never heard or read of in my life.

"My reason for addressing your highness at present is this; These enthusiasts hold it right to propagate their doctrines by force. They made no secret of this at Wittemberg; and their declaration sunk deep into my mind. I saw plainly that they intended to overturn the existing governments, though Christ expressfy told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world.

"I do therefore most seriously entreat your highnesses, to employ that authority which God has given you, in preventing the schemes of these seditious persons, who would turn every thing upside down.

"They say they are moved by the Spirit; but I must observe, that it is a mark of a very bad spirit, when it exerts itself ONLY in pulling down temples and monasteries, and burning images. The greatest villains can do such things as these.

"They absolutely decline all inquiry into their principles. They talk pompously in private corners, and inflame the minds of the deluded mob, but will not open their mouths before any persons whom they think disposed to examine the grounds of their pretensions.

"I must tell them, I have augured no good of them since they refused to open their sentiments before our evangelical friends at Wittemberg. They look on me as a lifeless christian, and as one who never was favored with hearing a voice from heaven. But, in the name of every thing that is good, suppose I had acted in this manner when I was called before the papists,—what triumphs should I have afforded them?

"With how much humility I proceeded, how gently, and step by step, in my first attacks upon the papacy, my writings are a testimony. Yet this same lowly spirit has produced effects such as these fanatics have never ventured to aim at or expect. And, not to boast, I stood forward, in a very critical and dangerous moment, as a public disputant at Leipsic, before a numerous audience. At Augsburg I appeared before my enemies without a safe conduct; and at Worms, I looked both the emperor and the whole German nobility in the face, though I knew the public faith had been violated on a former not very dissimilar occasion. Yet I made no pretence of hearing voices from heaven, or of being possessed of supernatural talents, or of having any thing of that spirit which has appeared at Alsted.

"It is not my wish that any persons, no, not even these fanatics, should be hindered from preaching.

. . .

Let them have free liberty to exhibit the best specimen they can of their erudition. Let them teach, bu keep their hands from violence; or, if they will persis in their ferocious, seditious practices, it will then be your duty to restrain them, and without hesitation, to banish them from your dominions.

"The warfare of an evangelist is of a spiritual nature. He is to preach and to bear the cross. We no where read that either Christ or his apostles pulled down churches or images; but that, when the Divine word had penetrated the hearts of men, the heathen churches and images of themselves came to nothing. We are to act in the same manner. Deliver human souls from the doctrines of the monasteries, and the buildings will soon be empty; and then it will be the province of the civil governors to determine what is to be done with them. But what harm can a heap of stones or wood do us? Not a particle of any building was ever thrown down or set on fire by me; yet by my tongue and my pen the monasteries almost every where have been desolated. Now, if I had attempted to bring about this revolution by violence, as these prophets do, I might have had to boast of levelling a few buildings, but the minds of men would have been still enchained in darkness and captivity as before, and the salvation of souls by no means promoted.

"It is allowed that the Roman pontiff has suffered more from me than what any monarch, with the whole force of his kingdom, could have made him to suffer. Yet have I not used the least violence in this contest. On the other hand, I ask what signal exploits have these prophets to boast of? Memorable victories indeed, over wood, stones, statues, and pictures! . . . Decisive proofs of the nature of the spirit that influences them!

"These insane wretches as yet have performed no miracle in attestation of their commission, except that of collecting mobs, despising the magistrates ordained by divine authority, throwing down statues and requiring an implicit belief that they are the people of God.

"A just application of the Divine word, in the production of TRUE faith, is the only way to correct all bad practices. The removal of external evils, while the heart is devoid of this principle, is of little service. Such a heart soon invents new ones. The true method of expelling Satan and ruining his devices, is that of the New Testament; namely, the exercise of preaching the word of God. This lays hold of the heart, and cures the evil radically.

"I conclude with humbly imploring your highnesses to resist these madmen effectually. Let the sacred scriptures have the pre-eminence; and let us, like true christians, have recourse to no other arms. Let every door and window be shut against sedition and the occasions of it. The common people are by nature sufficiently prone thereunto. But let it ever be remembered, that, though these enthusiasts boast of being influenced by six hundred spirits, this their constant disposition to fighting, as well as their other acts of violence, is a proof that they are not christians.

"May the right hand of Almighty God strengthen and preserve your highnesses!

Martin Luther."

Here let the learned reader for a moment reflect on the situation of Germany about the end of 1524, and the beginning of 1525. The several princes and states at variance respecting the grand tenets of the whole papal system. Intestine divisions among the reformers themselves concerning the nature of the eucharist. The almost certain prospect of an immediate civil war from immense crowds of ignorant and seditious peasants and vassals, associated with multitudes of licentious and dissolute enthusiasts, rendered outrageous and cruel by the harangues of Munzer and other incendiaries of his description.

The conduct of Luther about the period of this memorable conjuncture has fixed the character of this reformer beyond dispute.

It was not enough that Munzer had been driven out of the elector's dominions. As soon as Luther heard of his approach to Mulhausen, where he was known to have partizans, he gravely admonished the magistrates of the town not to receive him among them; "for he meditated nothing but robbery and murder, and other acts of violence. He was well known at Alsted. He had also emissaries, forming parties in various other places; but would never fully explain his designs. It could not be long before he would be better understood, and they would do well to profit by this friendly warning."

Luther likewise published, in the beginning of 1525, what he called A TREATISE AGAINST THE CELESTIAL PROPHETS AND CAROLSTADT. That unruly reformer had certainly been familiar with the leaders of the fanatical tribe, and had favored their sentiments: he had moreover, in his publications, spoken of Luther in the most offensive terms, had represented him as akin to Antichrist, and twice as bad as a papist; and in general had attacked him in every way with so much fury as to displease even his own party. Our author, in his answer, positively denies that it was through his means that Carolstadt had been banished. "Although," says he, "it may be true, and candor may require me to believe, that Carolstadt does not INTEND to promote sedition and murder, yet I must say, that so long as he persists in raising headstrong mobs, and exciting them to demolish statues with unauthorized violence, he possesses the same seditious, sanguinary spirit that has shown itself at Alsted. But, you say, he will not PERSIST in these practices. My answer is, I cannot credit his fine speeches. How often has Melancthon in vain admonished him not to raise tumults respecting ceremonies, and yet has he continued to defend the breakers of the peace to the very last!

"Moreover, I own it weighs very much with me that he is known to keep company with these prophets, who are the very source of this Alstedine spirit. From these he hears lessons, and with these he is closely connected."

Luther, in the former part of his treatise, most earnestly entreats the magistrates to animadvert severely upon all preachers who should exhort their congregations, without warrant, to pull down images and churches. The danger, he said, was, lest the common people, actuated by this tumultuary spirit of Carolstadt, should imagine that they had the authority of their bibles to do the same things which the Israelites were commanded to do. From destroying images, they would easily proceed to destroy men. In regard to the mass and the elevation of the host, he said, if the papists would but give up the idea of the eucharist being a sacrifice, he should have no dispute with them either about a harmless word or harmless practice. The latter part of the work is extremely interesting and instructive; first, as it lays open the way in which Carolstadt appears to have been led into his enthusiastic proceedings; and secondly, as it describes the argumentation by which the author himself was deluded into a belief of the doctrine of consubstantiation.

1. "God," says he, "deals with his creatures both by external means, as preaching and the outward signs of the sacraments, and also by internal, as the operation of his Spirit and faith in the heart. Now in the ordinary course of his providence the external means precede the internal; but Carolstadt perverts this order; he derides the water in baptism, and the bread and wine in the sacrament; and would begin at once with the spirit of the ordinances. "Then if you ask him what he understands by the Spirit, he instantly whirls you away into Utopian regions, tells you to remain perfectly calm and unoccupied, and in that state to expect a celestial voice. In a word, he rejects entirely the use of external means, and has invented a number of strange, barbarous, uncouth words to express that obscure state of ADMIRATION, MORTIFICATION, SUSPENSION, FREEDOM FROM IMPURITY, and such like, in which the soul must be, to favor the reception of the Spirit."

2. Luther makes excellent observations on the practical use of the Lord's supper, and on the meaning of eating spiritually the body of Christ. He then proceeds to defend his unfortunate notion of the real presence. "We do not say that Christ is called down from heaven by the word of the officiating priest: for

though he be present in the sacrament, he does not leave heaven any more than he left it when he was in his mother's womb. We are not commanded to scrutinize in what manner Christ is in the bread; it is sufficient that he himself has said that it is so. Men may exclaim and contend for a thousand years, but they will never be able to take away the expressions, which are as clear as words can make them."

The causes of the RUSTIC WAR, or the WAR OF THE PEASANTS, as it has been called, were purely secular, and are to be sought for in the writings of the proper historians. This rebellion, however, in its consequences, was so far connected with religion, that it certainly retarded the progress of the blessed reformation; it also gave occasion to the papists to accuse the protestants unjustly of holding seditious principles; and afforded those who were sound and sincere an illustrious opportunity of exhibiting in their conduct the practical excellence of christian doctrines.

In the former part of 1525, a prodigious multitude, composed chiefly of furious and enthusiastic peasants and vassals, arose suddenly in different parts of Germany, who took arms against their lawful governors, and were guilty of the most horrid and barbarous actions. Many of these rioters, had long groaned under heavy oppressive taxes and burthens; and, in their public manifestoes, they declare that they intend nothing further than to obtain a relaxation of the severity of their chiefs, and a greater portion of civil liberty. But the enthusiast Munzer availed himself of this troubled state of the empire, put himself at the head of the numerous and discontented rabble, inflamed their passions by his violent and delusive harangues, and, by his relation of visions and inspirations, and pretended foresight of certain success, rendered them altogether desperate and outrageous.

In this turbulent and extensive agitation of the lower orders of the people, it was probable enough that SOME, who professed themselves favorers of Lutheranism, would ignorantly or perversely misconstrue the reformer's doctrines of christian liberty, and in that dangerous persuasion flock to the standard of the rebels: but the papal adversaries of the reformation have by no means been content with this concession, or even with exaggerating the effects of this abuse of the protestant faith; they have constantly laid the WHOLE mischief of this intestine dissention at the door of Luther and his disciples, and, in spite of the clearest and most positive contrary evidences, continued to represent the licentious and detestable faction of Munzer as originating in that reformer's tenets and instructions, and deriving its strength and numbers from the prevalence of the novel ecclesiastical system.

On this account it becomes the more necessary to examine the facts with a scrupulous and even jealous attention.

As soon as Luther found that all his labors in warning and instructing the princes, magistrates and people, did not avail to repress the rising spirit of tumult and rebellion, but rather that the tempest appeared to thicken and portend a dreadful crisis, he determined, without loss of time, to address his countrymen of all ranks and orders in language still more explicit and decisive than any which he had hitherto used.

The style of his publication addressed to the COMMON PEOPLE is of this kind:

"Let every one beware of sedition, as a very heinous crime; and this not only in what relates to external actions, but even to words and secret thoughts. I might auger well of your professing yourselves ready to yield to the precepts of scripture, but that I observe your boasts of a regard for pure evangelical faith and practice are absolutely without foundation. Not one of your propositions has the least relation to any part of the gospel; they all tend to promote a merely secular freedom; whereas the gospel does not treat of these subjects, but describes our passage through this world as attended with afflictions, and as calling for patience, contempt of riches, and even of life itself. What then have ye to do with the gospel, except that ye use it as a pretext to cover your unchristian purposes?"

Such was the reputation of the Saxon divine, tha the rustic insurgents would gladly have obtained hi countenance to their proceedings; and for this en they had both requested his advice, and appealed t his impartiality respecting the justice of their cause moreover, that they might the more effectually secur his patronage, they stated their primary requisition t be, the entire privilege of choosing or removing thei ministers, that they might have the pure gospe preached to them without human mixtures and traditions. These artful rioters imagined, that no topic more than that which concerned the free election o preachers, was likely to interest and rouse the spirit o Luther, who himself had long been struggling for the maintenance of christian liberty at the hazard of hi life.

Nothing but downright plain dealing could hav extricated our reformer and his cause from the snare and dangers of the present critical moment. Deepl sensible of this, Luther proceeds thus:

"I allow that those rulers, who oppress their subjects in various ways, and particularly in excludin the preaching of the gospel from among them, ar without excuse; nevertheless, it is at the peril of the loss of both your souls and bodies, if ye do not preserve a good conscience in this matter. Satan at thi time has raised up a number of seditious, sanguinar teachers; therefore I entreat you not to believe ever thing you hear. Ye call yourselves christians, an profess to be obedient to the laws of God. In the firs place, it is extremely improbable that true christian should be so numerous as to furnish such large bodie of men as ye pretend to have on your side. A tru christian is a scarce bird in the world. I would tha the major part of men were but sober, and hones moralists! Secondly, take care and do not abuse th name of God: for as easily as he drowned the whol world, and rained fire upon Sodom, he can destro you. Your actions make it very plain to me that you profession of obedience to the law of God is a pretence. St. Paul orders all men, without exception, t obey the magistrates; whereas ye would snatch the sword from him, and resist the power which is ordained of God. Moreover, the duty of the christian in general is to suffer, to bear the cross, and not to revenge or have recourse to arms. What appearance is there of this humble spirit in your conduct? Our Lord forbad Peter to resist; and, when nailed to the cross, he patiently committed his cause to God the Father, and prayed for his murderers. Do ye imitate his example or pretend not to the character of a christian? Ye intend to carry your points by force of arms; but ye will not succeed.

"Permit me to say a word concerning my own conduct. The pope, the emperor, and all the world were in a rage against me; and the more they raged, the greater was the progress of my doctrine. Yet I did not take a single violent step; never said or wrote a syllable of an inflammatory tendency; much less did I draw the sword. Ever in my writings I defended all legal authority, even that of persecuting princes. I trusted solely in God; and he has not only prospered my labors abundantly, but, to the great astonishment of many, I myself am alive at this day, very much against the wish of the Roman pontiff and many other enemies. YOUR warlike modes of proceeding are calculated to produce quite different effects. I pray God to prevent the execution of your designs. I see Satan's meaning, and my own danger: he is aiming to take away my life; he is aiming to effect by a sanguinary faction what he has hitherto attempted in vain by the papal agents; but God will continue to preserve me. I say further, Satan, the enemy of mankind, would gladly bring into disgrace the late revival of pure doctrine among the people by insinuating as though it could not be of God, because the profession of it had caused so much sedition and tumult; and thus your unchristian conduct affords a great handle to the adversary.

"Compel me not, I beseech you, to pray against you; for I doubt not but God will hear my prayers; whereas YE can have no heart for prayer. Scripture and your own consciences tell you, your attempts are profane and impious. In fact, ye do not pray; your hope is in your numbers and your arms.

"In regard to your first requisition, the privilege of choosing your ministers, it is utterly inadmissible in all cases where the right of patronage belongs to your governors.

"I admit that magistrates do many unreasonable and many wicked things. Some of YOUR requisitions also are extremely unreasonable and unscriptural; but were they in all respects perfectly unexceptionable, yet this wicked endeavor to extort them by force of arms will, I tell you, if persevered in, bring down upon you the heavy wrath of God both in this world and the next. The divine rule is express: you must never go beyond PETITION and REPRESENTATION; and if you are persecuted, you must fly from one place to another."*

Our author then turns to the princes and nobility, and addresses them with the zeal and authority of an apostle. "It is to you, rulers, and you only, especially the rulers of the church, that the present disturbances are to be ascribed. The bishops, to this very moment even against their better knowledge, persecute the gospel; and the civil magistrates think of nothing but draining the wretched poor, to satisfy their own pride and luxury. I have repeatedly warned you of the dreadful evils that threaten you, but to no purpose The wrath of God is accumulating over you, and will burst on your heads if ye repent not. These false prophets, and this rebellion of the common people are proofs of the divine displeasure. To be plain such is the state of things, that men neither can, nor will, nor indeed should they, bear your government any longer. Listen to the scriptures, and amend your ways. The insurgents may not succeed at present and you may kill the greater part of them; but God will raise up others after them. For it is HE himself who, for your wickedness, brings these troubles upon you. Some of you have boasted, that you were ready

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Matt. x.

to sacrifice your rank and fortune if you could but abolish Lutheranism, root and branch; and others, to fill up the measure of their crimes and bring fresh disgrace upon the gospel, represent these seditious tumults as the consequence of my doctrine. Thus do you harden your hearts; thus do you calumniate and persecute the word of God.

"Yourselves are my witnesses that I have always detested sedition, and exhorted the people to obedience, and even to patient submission under your tyrannical government. It is not I therefore, it is these bloody prophets, who are quite as inimical to me as they are to you, who have been the cause of this rebellion, and who have been seducing the people for more than three years, without any one person except myself endeavoring to counteract them. Now if, for your wickedness, it should please God to permit Satan, through the instrumentality of these preachers, to raise this impending storm to such a pitch as is beyond my power of allaying it, what blame, I pray, can you lay to the charge of the gospel, or of Luther, who has constantly honored your authority, exhorted the people to respect you, poured out his prayers to God for you, and himself hitherto patiently enduring your cruel persecutions? Were I actuated by a spirit of revenge, I might smile in private at these tragical scenes, or I might stimulate the enraged populace, and add fuel to the flames.

"Let me entreat you then, O ye princes, not to despise my advice. Do not fear the rebels, but fear God. Our crimes are such as ought to alarm us; and if God should purpose to deal with us according to our deserts, we cannot escape HIS vengence however small the number of the rebels should prove. Great moderation is the line of conduct which ye ought to pursue at the present crisis. Lenity and clemency can do no harm, and may prevent matters from being pushed to extremities; in one word, may prevent a conflagration, which might consume all Germany.

"It is very true that the demands of the malcontents originate in interested motives; nevertheless some of them are so reasonable, that you ought to be ashamed of having reduced your subjects to the necessity of making them. Their first requisition, which respects the legal appointment of evangelical preachers, is so far just in its principle, that no ruler has a right to withhold the gospel from his subjects: and though I grant, that in the application of this principle they manifest a selfish spirit, and set up claims which, under the pretence of liberality, would annihilate the power of their master, yet their iniquitous demands will not justify you in refusing them substantial justice. It is the duty of governors not to vex and distress their subjects, but to be the guardians of their fortunes and their comforts; whereas, in truth, the oppression of the poor peasants of this country is become intolerable, the numerous and heavy imposts cramp their industry, and there is but one way left of meliorating their condition: the higher orders must restrain their excessive luxury and extravagance, which is the true cause of the evil."

Lastly, when Luther had finished these distinct harangues, both to the higher and lower orders of the people, he thought proper to conclude with a few words of serious advice to the parties in common.—He exhorted them not to think of deciding their disputes by arms, for both sides had a bad cause to defend. It was hard to say whether tyranny or sedition produced worse consequences; no man could fight for either with a good conscience; and those who perished in such a contest would die in their sins. "My advice," says he, "is, that all the disputable points be settled by impartial arbiters chosen on both sides. Let the rulers and nobles concede something of their strict rights, and let the common people in their turn be more moderate in their demands, and listen to the voice of reason; otherwise this civil war will assuredly be the ruin of the country. But if this advice is despised, if the people will wage war against their rulers as so many tyrants and oppressors, and the rulers will treat their subjects as banditti and barbarians, I humbly pray God either to confound the designs of both parties, or in some way to overrule this ferocious obstinacy of men to the re-establishment of peace and harmony."

But these christian exhortations proved ineffectual. This civil war not only continued, but soon became bloody and destructive. In Suabia, Franconia, and Alsace, the fanatical insurgents pulled down monasteries, castles, and houses, and murdered the nobles and dignitaries, and were guilty of multiplied acts of treason and barbarity. The moment Luther became acquainted with these abominable excesses, he deemed it the duty of a sound christian to support the lawful government of his country with all his might in an emergency which threatened universal anarchy and devastation. Accordingly, he changed his language, wrote a short tract AGAINST THE ROBBERS AND MURDERERS, and exhorted all ranks and orders to come forward and help, as they would to extinguish a general conflagration. "The wicked parricides," he said, "must be crushed. They had scandalously broken their oaths, plundered the right owners of their possessions, and committed treason in various ways; and, what very much increased their guilt, they endeavored to cloke their shameful practices under the name and character of pure christianity. There could not be greater pests of society. Those indeed among them who had been compelled to join the faction by threats were to be treated with lenity, but those only who repented and surrendered themselves ought to be pardoned. The rest merited the utmost rigor; and whosoever should fall in opposing them, and defending their lawful rulers, ought to be esteemed as martyrs in an excellent cause."

The publication of Luther was blamed by many as too harsh and violent; but the author, in reply, defended his positions with great spirit and ability. He complained, that whatever he did or said was sure to afford matter for censure to haughty critics. He contended, that those who could excuse the present offenders must be considered as partakers in their crimes. Lastly, he alledgedSt. Paul's peremptory judgment of those who resist lawful magistrates; and strenuously insisted on this rebellion of the rustics as being marked with peculiar circumstances of cruelty and impiety.

To relate all the particulars of the rebellion in 1525 would be foreign to our purpose: it may be sufficient to add, that the princes of the empire found it absolutely necessary to unite their forces and their efforts for the suppression and punishment of the insurgents. The carnage in various parts of Germany was dreadful. A vast multitude of the faction in Thuringia were met by the Saxon and other confederate princes near Mulhausen, where they were defeated in a pitched battle, and Munzer their ringleader was also taken and put to death.

This unfortunate war is supposed to have cost Germany the lives of more than fifty thousand men;* but the papal advocates are not to be credited when they assert that one hundred and thirty thousand Lutherans perished from this cause. The fact is, by far the greatest tragedies were exhibited in the POPISH part of Germany: moreover, the Lutherans abounded most in the electorate of Saxony, where matters were certainly carried on with greater mildness and moderation, as well by the rebels themselves during the commotions, as by the government in their measures to suppress them. It well deserves notice, that the tumults were the greatest in those districts where the free course of the gospel had been most completely obstructed. The good elector Frederic adverted to this circumstance, in a memorable letter written to his brother and successor on the very day before he died.

"The princes," says he, "have applied to us for our assistance against the peasants; and I could wish to open my mind to them but I am too ill. Perhaps the principal cause of these commotions is, that these poor creatures have not been allowed to have the word of God preached freely among them."

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* Beausobre.

CHAPTER VI.

The Death of the Elector of Saxony. Marriage of Luther.

ABOUT ten days before the defeat of Munzer, the leader of the rustic insurgents, the good elector of Saxony departed this life. He was too feeble in body, and too deeply concerned in mind, to make any attempt at joining the confederate princes. Only three days before his death, which happened May 5th, 1525, he exhorted, by letter, his brother John, who succeeded him in the electorate, to do his utmost to compose the disturbances, by choosing arbitrators who were good men and favorites of the people; to avoid the spilling of blood, to pardon the multitude, and to punish only the ringleaders of the rebellion. The delusion, he said, would not last long. God, who had hitherto protected their country, would continue to protect it. This was the last time he should be able to write to him, but he trusted they should meet again in a better world.

The mind of this conscientious prince appears to have been strongly impressed with a belief that the primary cause of the rebellion of the peasants was the just judgment of God, on account of the obstruction, with which the preaching of the pure gospel had been attended; and as a secondary cause, he lamented, that not only the ruling clergy, but also the civil governors oppressed their subjects in a variety of ways.—Spalatinus informs us, that, a short time before he expired, he addressed his servants and domestics in the following terms. "I entreat you, my dearest children, in the name of God, and for HIS sake, to forgive me, if I have offended you in word or deed; and I further intreat you to make in my name this same request for me to others. We princes are apt to treat our poor distressed subjects in a vexatious and unjustifiable manner. I cannot say any more." "Does any thing," said Spalatinus, "lie heavy on your mind?" He answered, "No, but I have much bodily pain;" and expired in the 63d year of his age like one falling asleep.

Before the Lutheran controversies commenced, this pious prince had been a most industrious collector of reliques, and had augmented the number of masses in his church of All Saints to 10,000 annually. In his will, made in the year 1517, Frederic had joined with the Holy Trinity the blessed Virgin, St. Bartholomew the apostle, and then his tutelary angel, and all the saints of God, to whose intercession he committed his soul. Also in that will he enjoined, that for a month after his death, there should be every day, no less than fifty masses said, with a small allowance for each.—But in the last will and testament of this prince, the pure doctrine of the gospel gloriously triumphs over the ancient superstition. Here, not a word is said of the Virgin Mary, of saints or apostles, or masses, but his words were "I beseech Almighty God, through the sacred and unexampled merits of his Son, to pardon all my sins and transgressions : neither do I doubt but that, by the precious death of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I shall obtain forgiveness ; and therefore into his all powerful hands, and to his eternal, immeasurable unsearchable kindness and commpassion, I commit my soul, to be preserved for the enjoyment of a happy immortality. I freely forgive all who have done me wrong ; and I beseech them in the name of God, and for HIS sake, to pardon, from the heart and with a true christian charity, me in whatever I may have offended them, agreeably to what we every day pray for, the mutual forgiveness of trespasses from God, the Father of compassion."

By the advice of Luther, and Melancthon, he was buried without pomp, and without superstition. There is great reason to believe he died in the faith, hope, and humility of the gospel.

In the month of October, 1524, there were left in the monastery of Wittemberg only the prior and Luther ; and the latter availed himself of that opportunity to resign the title and habit of an Augustine monk, and in future was called merely doctor, or professor, Martin Luther. He had long been desirous of taking this step, but well knowing the elector's aversion, he delayed to press the point. At last he expressed a wish to Spalatinus that he might have the prince's final answer, and he promised never more to importune him on the subject. Frederic, with some humor, and much good nature, sent him a piece of cloth, and told him he was at liberty to wear it in whatever shape he pleased.

The tender conscience of Luther seems to have been long hesitating concerning the obligation of voluntary monastic vows. But having, at length, become fully satisfied that they were restraints of mere human invention, designed for self-righteous purposes, he issued from his Patmos his admirable tract on this subject, which gave a fatal blow to the whole papal system.

Luther was about 40 years old when he married Catharine Boore, a virtuous nun of noble parentage. His enemies on this occasion exulted, and condemned them both, with as much confidence as if they could alledge that scripture authority for the monastic state, which protestants can for the matrimonial. They represented Luther as an infamous, hardened sensualist, who had neither command of his passions, nor regard to his reputation; and his wife as an abandoned strumpet, who had lived in the most licentious manner for more than two years among the young academics.—These foolish and wicked accusations are, however, effectually refuted by history, which does abundant justice to the moral character of both the parties.

But several of Luther's best friends did not think his marriage well timed. He, however, justified his conduct by saying, "I judged it right to confirm, by my own example the doctrine that I have taught, for I observe many are still pusillanimous, notwithstanding this great light of the gospel." Again, he thus writes to a friend: "As I may be taken off suddenly, and as my doctrine respecting the lawfulness of the marriage of the clergy may possibly be treated with contempt after my death, I was desirous of showing my weaker brethren that I acted up to my principles."

In the latter part of the succeeding year, Luther writes thus: "God of his great goodness hath blessed me with a fine healthy little Luther; and my rib Kate is also in excellent plight, and is in all things courteous and obliging to me, much beyond what I could have ventured to hope. I am thankful to God, and would not change my poverty for the riches of Crœsus."

Not a syllable seems to have dropped from Luther, to excite the least suspicion that he repented of his marriage, or was afterward on that account low spirited. On the contrary, a good conscience, confidence in God, and resignation to HIS will, characterize all his letters written upon this subject, without a single exception. When he had attained true scriptural views of the nature of christian liberty, and the proper moment for his own marriage had come, he acted according to those views without hesitation, under the full conviction that he was doing right, and in confident expectation of the Divine blessing.

CHAPTER VII.

Progress of the Reformation.

WHEN John, the new elector of Saxony, came into office, as successor of Frederic the wise, the minds of men were much enlightened in matters of religion. Sound policy, as well as reason and justice, therefore, dictated to him the wisdom of making a stand, from the very first of his government, against the illegal and exhorbitant pretensions of the Roman see. Happily this excellent prince was qualified to act well his part at this critical juncture. Although he was not profoundly skilled in the science of politics, yet his moral endowments and steady temper have procured him with posterity the illustrious titles of the good and the CONSTANT. John knew that an appeal had been made to the tribunal of reason: and that reason had already decided in a manner which had astonished all Europe: and he was fully convinced that now to temporize with a corrupt and unprincipled hierarchy might be injurious to the good cause which he was determined to support. Though this good elector could see that much had been done to emancipate the subjects of the Roman domination from the chains of papal superstition and imposition, yet could he see there still remained an alarming combination of interested princes and prelates, opposed to christian truth and liberty, and supported by multitudes of their bigoted subjects and adherents, who meditated no less than the entire annihilation of the infant reformation.

The zeal and constancy of the new elector, were as loudly called for at this crisis, as ever the prudence and caution of his brother Frederic had been, for the personal safety of Luther, and the success of his early endeavors to reform a corrupt ecclesiastical establishment. John, the CONSTANT, had a most excellent coadjutor in his own son, John Frederic, who seems to have possessed the united virtues both of his father and his uncle Frederic.

The university and the collegiate church of Wittemberg soon experienced a salutary renovation; a new order of public worship was provided; other churches began now to be modelled after the plan of Wittemberg; and a general visitation was promised of all the churches in Saxony. The elector and his son, John Frederic, shewed the utmost readiness to adopt the counsels of Luther; but that zealous reformer did not always wait for their sanction, well aware of the difficulties and delays which his plans might often meet with at court, from the privy counsellors of the prince. He did not, however, neglect to transmit to the prince, in a respectful manner, the formularies of the new ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies, which, with the advice of Melancthon and Pomeranus, he had drawn up, and which the reformers had actually begun to use at Wittemberg. The sacrament was there administered to the laity, for the first time, in the German, instead of the Latin language, on the Lord's day, October 29th, 1525. The regulation of the public service of the church, and the appointment of well qualified pastors, was a matter near the heart of the reformer.

The elector approved of the new regulations of Luther and sent two of his counsellors to confirm them publicly, and to carry them to a still greater extent.—The reformer himself, however, seems to have been the leading counsellor at this important crisis. He stated in writing, at full length, the situation of the university; how sadly it was on the decay, considered as a seminary of learning and piety: and he entreated the prince to send commissioners to fix the salaries of the professors and lecturers. He explained to him what steps he himself had actually ventured to take, both in regard to the academical lectures and the Divine service. He observed, that though he might have been, perhaps, too troublesome in this business, or even shown too much distrust of the elector's paternal care, yet he had this excuse to plead; that the first of his conduct, however faulty or indefensible it might have been, had proved no less than the means of preserving the university from instant dissolution.

Luther with great seriousness admonished the elector to make some provision for the poor laboring clergy: and also to amend the proceedings of the ecclesiastical courts. The elector took all this in excellent part; but appears to have been considerably startled at the idea of augmenting the salaries of the clergy out of his own treasury. "That," he said, "would be a matter of great difficulty; and he asked Luther what he had to propose on the subject." The answer was simply this: "In the general visitation of the whole country, let there be taken an accurate account of all the ancient revenues: and if these be found insufficient for the purpose, then let suitable payments to the officiating clergy be made from new imposts on the respective towns and parishes, which they may well bear, being now relieved from many popish oppressions." Likewise, to a similar inquiry concerning the augmentation of the academical salaries, Luther replied, "There is an abundance of means for this purpose from the many vacant offices; for the number of the clergy in the collegiate church of All Saints is now reduced from eighty to eighteen. All the rest are either dead, or have left their situation."

The most experienced financier could scarcely have returned a better answer to the question.

The due application of the surplus funds of this rich church of Wittemberg had been, for some time past, an object of considerable attention and difficulty.—The elector Frederic, supported by the older members of the chapter, for a long time had resisted the abolition of private masses; and during the altercation on this point in 1523, he had even threatened the sturdy reformers with the sequestration of the ecclesiastical salaries, unless they continued to observe strictly their ancient institutions. Luther, however, in a matter of great importance, was not to be discouraged by disappointment or opposition. He pressed the late elector afresh on the same subject, with spirit and address; and as there were then three new canons, whose consciences would not permit them to comply with the papal usages, he entreated the prince to allow their stipends to be employed for the advantage of the professors and students of the university. The answer of Frederic was now in all respects gracious and favorable, and afforded a good hope that Luther's ideas would be adopted. In fact, by connivance rather than by express directions, that prince had permitted the redundant ecclesiastical wealth to be gradually diverted into the channels above mentioned. This redundant wealth was become very considerable, from the abolition of private masses, and many other protestant innovations. But it is allowed by historians, that not one halfpenny of it was ever applied by Frederic to his own specific emolument.

Such disinterested conduct has rendered his memory truly illustrious; and is a complete refutation of the rash aspersions of those who, either through ignorance or malice, would insinuate that this excellent prince favored the reformation from motives of avarice, and secret intentions of plundering the opulent ecclesiastics. However, the elector John, with a more enlightened conscience, and a more magnanimous spirit, not only confirmed what had been barely permitted by his predecessor during the last years of his life, but also gave the revenues of the deserted monasteries for the purpose of maintaining the parochial clergy and the public instructors, both in the churches and the schools. He suffered nothing to come into competition with the reformation, as an object of his concern: and as he was undoubtedly the first prince in Germany who openly both resisted the popish doctrines and discipline, and established the new system of the Wittemberg theologian, he has been justly denominated the SECOND PARENT and founder of the Lutheran church.

The laudable efforts of the elector and his son were much encouraged by the friendly dispositions of their neighbor Philip, the landgrave of Hesse. These dispositions had appeared at a conference which they had with the landgrave at Creutzberg, only a few weeks before the death of Frederic; when he had declared, that rather than be a deserter from the word of God, he would lose his wealth, his dominions, and even his life. Luther, whose active and comprehensive eye was in every corner, writes thus to Spalatinus on this occasion: "I rejoice that the prince of Hesse has had a conversation with our princes. I hope it will be to the advantage of the gospel."†

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† There is something so curious in the whole letter, that I will venture to give the reader the substance of it. It should seem that certain mock suns, as they are termed by astronomers, had been observed in the heavens; and Spalatinus had sent Luther a drawing of the appearances, with the judgment of Melancthon upon them. This excellent reformer is known to have been addicted to astrology. Luther begins:

"Grace and peace. I return you the drawings of the solar appearances.—They are Divine prodigies, my Spalatinus; but it is not my province to comprehend their meaning. I do not pretend to foretel the events signified by such things. That red bloody sun which appeared in the west, seems to denote the king of France: and the bright sun in the middle, the emperor. This is Melancthon's opinion; at the same time they indicate the day of judgment I rejoice that the prince of Hesse has had a conversation with our princes. I hope it will be to the advantage of the gospel. I have here a new species of fanatics from Antwerp, who assert that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than men's natural reason and understanding. How does Satan rage every where against the word! And this I reckon by no means the slightest mark of the approaching end; namely, that Satan perceives the day is at hand, and pours forth his final fury. MARTIN LUTHER."

But the duke George of Saxony was a lamentable obstacle to any religious association which did not profess, as the basis of union, implicit obedience to the Roman see: and the opposition of this veteran papist was at any time to be dreaded, not merely on account of his wealth and the number of his subjects, but also the situation of his provinces, which lay enclosed in the electorate of Saxony. Philip of Hesse was his son-in-law, and was sanguine enough to entertain the hope of gaining duke George to the cause of the gospel, by writing to him a brief exhortation, full of piety and affection. George sternly replied, "That he should commit the cause to God; for, that after a hundred years it would appear who was right and who was wrong." The honest landgrave, like most young converts, had not yet been taught, by experience, how exceedingly perverse and obdurate men usually become by being long hackneyed in the ways of Pharisaical religion; but this rough answer of the father-in-law was an instructive lesson, no doubt, to his son-in-law Philip. The same answer produced reflections in the truly christian mind of the young prince John Frederic, which deserve to be remembered. "I am shocked," said he, "at the sentiments contained in the letter of George, especially at his saying the truth will appear after a hundred years. What sort of faith is that which requires an experiment to support it? Assuredly, there is nothing of the nature of faith, where a man will not believe till he is convinced by experience. St. Paul says, "Faith comes by hearing;" not by experience. I am grieved at the poor prince's situation; for if he will not believe what is true and right till after trial has been made, and, also, if during the trial he is determined to refuse obedience to the word of God, he may defer the important business too long, that is, till there be no room for repentance. I would have every method used to cure him of his attachment to popery, if, by the grace of God, there be a possibility of doing it. But I greatly fear all will be to no purpose; and that God will harden him, like Pharaoh, so that he will neither receive his word, nor regard his signal providences."

The unhappy duke George must have suffered considerable mortification on account of the increasing propagation of evangelical truth during the year 1525. The magistrates of several of the imperial cities adopted the reformation in form. At Nuremberg there was a public conference, in full senate, and in the presence of many of the inhabitants, between Osiander at the head of several of the evangelical teachers on the one part, and five leading preachers of the papal party on the other; the issue of which was that there should be no more sermons or ceremonies at the monasteries, and that the monks should no longer be exempted from the usual burdens of the rest o the inhabitants. Hagenau in Alsace received the Divine word from Wolffgang Capito, who was a native o Hagenau, and had been called thither from Strasburg to strengthen the cause of the protestant party. Capito administered the sacrament on Palm Sunday, according to the scripture method: and on Easter Sunday without using salt, oil or any papistical ceremony, he baptized, before a great multitude, who had flocked together to see the novelty, a child of a principal inhabitant called Wendelinus, by the name of Josiah; the father intimating thereby, that as the book of the law was found in the reign of Josiah, and in consequence the true worship of God restored, so the holy Bible which had been in a manner lost during the papacy was, through the goodness of God, found again on the birth of his little Josiah, and the scriptural doctrine o salvation restored to Germany. At Northusa, in Thuringia, the inhabitants met together, read over Luther's early writings on the reformation, conferred on the several points, acknowledged the errors of popery, and determined to establish a purer church. The magistrates seconded the wishes of the people, and appointed the prior of the Augustine monastery to preach the gospel in St. Peter's church.

Several counties also of the empire were evangelized about the same time; for example, those of Hanau Altenberg, and Teclenberg. In the marchionate o Lusatia, the two elegant and rich cities of Gorlitz and Luban experienced a similar improvement. The clergy of the neighboring villages assembled in the city of Gorlitz, and there publicly renounced the authority and jurisdiction of their popish diocesan, and at the same time abolished many of the Romish customs and vanities. At Dantzic, one of the most celebrated marts of the north, the progress of the gospel was astonishing. "You may learn," says Luther, "from one of the clergy of Dantzic, who is come here on the express errand of requesting the prince to permit Pomeranus to go among them, how wonderfully Christ is at work in that place. We cannot well spare him: yet, in so important an evangelical concern, we ought, I think to give way. Who knows what God may do through his instrumentality? Let us neither obstruct so extraordinary a call, nor pretend to be ignorant of its meaning. If I were called in this manner, I should not dare to refuse: I would go instantly!"

I am persuaded no christian reader will be fatigued with perusing such extracts as these, or think them ill placed in a history of the church of Christ. They introduce us into the very secret corners of the hearts of the Saxon divines, and prove, beyond contradiction, what was the real spirit of the reformation at this blessed season.

In this brief review of the increase of evangelical light, we must not omit to mention what happened at Francfort on the Main. The inhabitants, through the instructions of two laborious evangelical preachers, had acquired such an insight into the corruptions and abuses of the papal system, that they assembled in a tumultuous manner a little before Easter, and insited on the abolition of the popish mass and other ceremonies. The senate interfered, and informed the ecclesiastics of the papal party, that if they expected the support and defence of the magistrates, they must confute, by the word of God, those tenets of the evangelical teachers which maintained that the MASS was NOT A SACRIFICE. Finding this impossible, the papistical preachers quitted three of the principal churches, which were immediately occupied by the reformers.

This glorious progress of the truth, and fall of Antichrist, did not take place without the shedding of some blood of the martyrs.

James Pavan of Bolonge having been seized in the preceding year, on account of his profesions of pure christianity, had recanted through fear of death.—In the course of the present year 1525, he became bold again in the cause of the gospel; he preached openly on the nature of the sacrament; and agreeably to his own express wish, was burnt alive at Paris. He surrendered his life, in the moment of trial, with the utmost cheerfulness.

A German, named Wolffgangus Schuch, had been appointed pastor of one of the towns in Lorraine, and during his faithful ministry had abolished the mass, and the worship of images and idols. His congregation were accused of disloyalty to the duke of Lorraine. The duke threatened to destroy the town, with fire and sword. W. Schuch judged it his duty to step forward voluntarily, and defend his townsmen, though at the peril of his life. He composed a confession of his faith; and was on the eve of publishing it, when he was suddenly cast into a filthy dungeon, and condemned to the flames. On hearing his sentence, he broke out into the 122d Psalm: and when in the fire itself, he sung the 51st Psalm.

We are told by Abraham Scultetus, one of the most candid and credible historians that ever wrote, that the ecclesiastical judge of Schuch, and also his assessor who was an abbot, both died of sudden deaths, a very little time after: and the duke of Lorrain took pains to convince his courtiers, that nothing more was necessary for salvation than to know the Paternoster and Ave Maria.

At Mechlin in Brabant, one Bernard, a Carmelite friar, is mentioned by Luther as having been burnt on account of his open profession of the gospel. And at the Hague in Holland, a clergyman, named John de Backer, scarcely 27 years old, after many long and vexatious examinations by the papistical inquisitors, merited the crown of martyrdom.

Amidst the new ecclesiastical establishments and regulations, which Luther, under the auspices of the elector and his son, was rapidly introducing into Saxony, he still found time for preaching the word of God, and for various useful publications. In reflecting on THIS PART of the labors of the Saxon reformer, it may in some measure lessen our surprise, if we advert to two things, both of which are beyond dispute: First, his unparalleled industry; time with him was always a precious thing: Secondly, his vast fund of religious knowledge, the result of long and patient study of the holy scriptures. But in regard to the other part, namely, how Martin Luther, who had spent so large a portion of his life in a monastery, and even now was far from being advanced in years, attained such consummate prudence and discretion, for the conduct of practical concerns in worldly affairs, may be a matter both of curious inquiry and just admiration. Certainly, it is easier to account for his numerous sermons, commentaries, and theological tracts, than for his wise institutions, both in the church and the university, where he had new offices and ranks and orders to arrange, new laws and discipline to digest, where the ecclesiastical and academical revenues were in the utmost confusion, redundant on some accounts, defective on others; and lastly, where the distribution of the same required fresh inspections and reviews, as well as the most judicious and impartial adjustments. Pious minds, however, who believe that the hearts of men are prepared and directed by a Divine superintending agency, especially on great occasions, will account for it without difficulty. And those who are disposed to explain the course of human events by what are called natural causes, should, in the first place, recollect distinctly, what were the specific endowments of Luther, allowed by all who are well acquainted with his history; namely, a conscientious integrity, incapable of being warped by selfish and interested considerations; a clear and comprehensive understanding, furnishing an almost instinctive view of the measures to be adopted in the most critical circumstances; a spirited and courageous temper, constantly impelling him to decision and despatch. Then, in the second place, they may be put in mind, that whatever pains they would take to exclude Almighty God from the government of his own creation, they cannot deny that at the very period when the revealed religion was most deplorably corrupted and defiled by human devices, and when there was the greatest need of a champion to contend with Antichrist, there was actually raised up in Saxony a personage qualified in this uncommon degree to fight manfully under the banners of Christ, and to restore his church to its genuine beauty and simplicity.

Among the numerous writings which Luther published, to advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, was a useful little book, containing 38 German hymns, with their appropriate tunes, which he composed and printed, just before he ventured to administer the Lord's supper in the German language. This he prepared and published for the purpose of fixing, in the memories of the common people, much religious instruction, in a concise and agreeable manner. The subjects were, parts of the catechism; leading articles of belief; prayers and thanksgivings: in fact, the book was a summary of christian doctrine, expressed in a very neat and elegant German metre; and so well managed, that the harmony and modulation of the voice agreed with the words and sentiments, and tended to raise the correspondent affections in the minds of the singers. On this account the author has been called the true Orpheus of Germany; and to his praise it is added, that he applied his knowledge of musical numbers and harmonies to the excitation of the most pious and fervid emotion in the soul.

In the preface to this little book he supports the duty of church music, on the authority of David and Paul; at the same time he puts us in mind, that in singing praises, we should have our eyes on Chris alone. "He had subjoined the suitable tunes," he says, "to show that the fine arts are by no means abo lished through the preaching of the gospel; but, that in particular, the art of music should be employed to the glory of God; though he knew this sentiment was contrary to the romantic ideas of some teachers who were disposed to allow nothing but what was purely intellectual.

During these incessant labors of this indefatigable servant of God, an attempt was made to take away his life by poison. A Polish Jew, a doctor of medicine, came to Wittemberg, having agreed to do this for two thousand pieces of gold. Luther describes him as a man of wonderful cunning and versatility; and as capable of committing any crime. The doctor and his accomplices were seized, and carried before a magistrate; but they refused to make any confession; and Luther entreated that they might be set at liberty, rather than be examined by torture, according to the custom of those times. Nevertheless, he expressed his entire belief that he was the very man who had been pointed out to him by the letters of certain friends. He says, "he answered their description in all respects and that every circumstance also concurred to identify the person of the Jew, and prove his guilt."

The sacramental dispute, concerning the *manner* in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the eucharist, has been already mentioned. Those labors of Luther, which he employed in the sacramental controversy, can afford but little satisfaction to Christian readers. The zeal, fervor and conscientiousness which ever marked the character of this great reformer, were in this controversy sadly sullied, by a *lamentable* obstinacy and perverseness of temper. While he adhered pertinaciously to the literal meaning of the declaration of Christ, "*This is my body*," as implying that the real *body* and *blood* of Christ were present in the eucharist; Zuingle and Oecolampadius, with others, insisted, that it was their belief according to the doctrine of St. Paul, "as often as we eat the bread and drink the wine of the sacrament, we shew the Lord's death till he come; that we consider, confess and declare, that Christ offered to his Father on the cross, his body and blood for our redemption; and doing this with a true faith, we know that our souls are really fed, refreshed and strengthened, by the flesh and blood of Christ."

The sacramental controversy was long continued, and served to disunite many of the friends of the rising reformation, who were in other respects, devoutly engaged in supporting unitedly, evangelical truths and practices.

As it may not tend greatly to the godly edification of the pious reader, to know all the circumstances of this long and unhappy controversy; suffice it to state, that Luther having been so much attached to his ideas of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharist, teaches us the importance of calling no man master in matters of faith and practice, and of regulating our faith and practice by the sacred scriptures.

The avowed and unequivocal support afforded to the reformation by the new elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, did not produce all the good effects which might have been expected from the wise and vigorous measures adopted by those illustrious princes, in the best of causes. Their example, indeed, was followed by the most enlightened princes and states of Germany; and, in consequence, an improved union, more solid, and better cemented than ever, took place among THESE. But the rest, who, under the cautious and ambiguous conduct of Frederic the Wise, had hitherto shown themselves averse to an open rupture, as soon as they clearly perceived that the reformers designed to withdraw themselves from the Romish communion and reject the jurisdiction of the pontiff, instantly took fire at the very idea of such a basis of peace and concord. Some of them had stood neuter during the violence of the religious differences; and others had even joined the Lutherans in their complaints against certain abuses of the established church; but none had ever once dreamed of entirely deserting the religious system of their ancestors; and, as matters were fast advancing to a crisis, they now thought it high time to make an open declaration of their attachment to the established hierarchy, and of their zeal and readiness to promote its interests.

Thus the discordant princes of Germany arranged themselves into two distinct parties, each of which seemed resolutely determined to adhere to its peculiar tenets.

But there was this essential difference between the patrons of popery and Lutheranism. All the measures of the latter were in principle purely defensive; whereas the former meditated the complete extirpation of their adversaries. Foiled in arguments repeatedly, they seemed to have given up the contest in that way; and to have expected better success by having recourse to slander. The late rustic war in Germany had afforded them a pretext for this purpose. They represented the Lutherans as bad subjects in general, and as the prime cause of that late rebellion, and of the bloodshed. Moreover, though the rebels had been severely handled at Mulhausen, yet fresh commotions were apprehended from the operation of the licentious doctrines of Munzer; therefore the electors of Mayence and Brandenburg, with the duke Henry of Brunswick and his uncle Eric, had a conference at Dessau; where they made no secret of declaring that the only radical cure of the evil would be to free the nation from the Lutheran heresy, and from those who protected it. This interview of the enemies of the reformation gave rise to much suspicion and anxiety in the minds of the landgrave of Hesse, especially as, with a view to the distracted state of the country, he had recently requested a friendly meeting with his father-in-law, the duke George, and had received a surly answer, "That before any thing could be done to the purpose, all the late innovations in religion must be effectually done away."

These proceedings had so little ambiguity in them that the Lutherans, about this time, began to deliberate seriously how they might best evade the blow with which they were threatened by a powerful and bigoted confederacy. They retorted the accusation of having been the cause of the rebellion of the peasants, and justly ascribed those sad events to the cruel, persecuting spirit of the nobles and dignitaries of the church. Various conventions of the princes were held in different places. At Salfeld, in particular, they came to this resolution, "That it became them, as Christian princes, to do every thing to promote the glory of God, and to conform their practice to the revealed word. That, by this word, the true doctrine of justification, through the mercy of God by faith in Jesus Christ, was now once more revived; and that, for this great benefit, eternal thanks were due to Almighty God." The proxies transmitted their resolution to the duke George, and at the same time animadverted severely on what had passed at the late assembly at Dessau.

Meanwhile, mandatory letters from Charles V. to his brother and representative, Ferdinand, dated Toledo, May 24, 1525, calling for a diet of the empire, increased both the discontent and the alarm of all those German princes who favored the reformation. The letters breathed nothing but destruction to the Lutherans, and the execution of the edict of Worms. He directed the diet to be held at Augsburg, on the next Michaelmas day; and privately, in a milder tone, requested the elector of Saxony to be present. But this prince, at the instance of the landgrave, resolved upon a previous measure, admirably calculated to defeat the violent designs of the papal party. This measure consisted in forming a *speedy association* with all the moderate and well-disposed states of the empire; such as, the elector Palatine, the elector of Treves, the margraves of Brandenburg, the duke of Luneburg, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg, the princes of Anhalt, the imperial cities of Nuremberg, Strasburg, Augsburg, and of Ulm and Magdeburg; the object of which association should be, to concur in representing to Ferdinand the imminent danger there was at this time of exciting fresh and more formidable riots and seditions, by any attempts to execute the edict of Worms; and how abundantly more wise and safe it would be, at the present moment, to come to some distinct determination and settlement respecting the religious differences.

The principal states of the empire agreed in the same sentiments; and even Ferdinand himself at length confessed the necessity of adopting pacific measures in the concerns of religion; and allowed the princes to send to the diet such of their theologians as *they* judged best qualified, by their knowledge and discretion, to prove useful advisers in the ensuing deliberations.

Accordingly, the elector of Saxony and the landgrave instructed their deputies to represent to the diet, that their masters complained heavily of the harsh terms in which the imperial mandate for calling the diet was expressed; that, in fact, the late rebellion of the peasants, which the princes had suppressed at the hazard of their lives, was to be imputed to such ill-timed and provoking severities; that Divine truth could not be extinguished in the minds of men by force; that much greater evils than any which had yet happened, would be the infallible consequence of the attempt, besides the despite done to the word of God; that those decrees of Nuremberg, which respected the reformation of religion, ought to be observed; and that, in a matter where the salvation of men's souls was concerned, the utmost care should be taken not to harass tender consciences, by increasing, instead of diminishing, the present evils; and, lastly, the deputies were ordered to oppose the execution of the edict of Worms with all their might.

Further: the elector of Saxony, well aware under how much odium he labored from the papal ecclesiastics, on account of the reformation in religion which he had authorized at Wittemberg, directed his theologians to prepare in writing, ready for the diet, a brief but comprehensive answer to the principal objections of the opposite party: and such a memoir is found among the archives of Weimar, neatly executed in the German language, by the pen of Melancthon.

What follows is a specimen of the author's manner of treating the subject. The question is whether we are guilty of the sin of schism, in preaching certain doctrines, and abolishing certain usages, not only without the leave of the bishops, but in direct opposition to their injunctions. For, as they can say nothing against our doctrine, they have no way left to condemn us, but by objecting to our want of authority from the ecclesiastical rulers.

They argue, 1. The bishops, and none else, possess any jurisdiction in the church.

2. They urge the infallibility of the church;—and therefore it is not possible there should have existed, for so many ages, the errors and idolatries which we have abrogated.

3. They put us in mind, that to obey is better than sacrifice;—we ought therefore to have been obedient to our superiors. Also,

4. To have shown a charitable regard for tender consciences. And,

5. Not to have raised civil wars by licentious innovations.

Melancthon rests the defence of the reformers upon the following facts and principles:

1. Every minister of the word of God is bound, by the express precept of Christ, to preach the leading doctrine of the gospel, namely, justification by faith in Christ Jesus, and not by the merit of human performances. Whereas, nothing is more certain than that men have been drawn from the cross of Christ, to trust in their own works, and in a variety of superstitious vanities.

2. God has forbidden, under the most heavy punishment, every species of idolatry and false worship: and of this class are, the sacrifice of the mass, masses for the dead, invocations of the saints, and such like; which things, though manifest blasphemies, it is notorious, have been taught in the church of Rome, and represented as sharing in their efficacy to salvation, with the merits of our Redeemer himself.

3. The pope and bishops neglect their duty; exercise an usurped authority even over emperors and princes, and, under the pretence of serving Christ, apply the possessions of the church to the service of their tyrannical purposes.

On these grounds the author argues, that the clergy, from the very nature of their vocation, have an unquestionable authority to preach the truths of the gospel; and, moreover, are called on the louder to do this, when the bishops are plunged in ignorance and luxury, and when they answer the admonitions and remonstrances of the reformers only by anathemas and persecutions. The pope, the cardinals, and the clergy of Rome, did not constitute the church of Christ, though there did exist among them some who were real members of that church, and opposed to the reigning errors; that the true church consisted of the faithful, and of none else, who had the word of God, and by it were sanctified and cleansed; that St. Paul had predicted there would come Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God; and, that the reformers were not guilty of schism, either because they had convicted Antichrist of his errors, or because they had made alterations in some external ordinances; that the unity of the church did not consist in such things; and that whoever maintained that it did, ought in every way to be most strenuously opposed. That to the charge of disobedience, the answer was easy; the pope and his bishops had exacted an unlawful obedience; that nothing short of giving up the word of God would content them; and that by their excommunications, and other persecutions of the reformed clergy, THEY THEMSELVES had at length stirred up the late rebellion in Germany.

Lastly, the author confirms his reasoning by quoting precepts of Christ himself, and by producing pertinent examples from the history, both of the Christian and the Jewish church. "The great doctrinal point," says he, in conclusion, "is that of faith in the merits of Christ, independently of human works, as the ground of acceptance before God. Rather than give up this, we must suffer persecution, and every species of disturbance."

In the same memoir, Melancthon touches upon another question; namely, Whether the princes had done right in authorizing the reformations which had been made in their colleges and monasteries, contrary to the edicts of the emperor and the pope?

"The whole," says our author, "turns upon this single consideration, whether the novel doctrines, as they are called, be or be not true? If true, the princes ought assuredly to protect them. The princes are no more under obligation to obey the higher powers in their tyrannical mandates, than Jonathan was to kill David, or Obadiah the prophets."

Such were the concise arguments by which the first reformers defended themselves from the charge of heresy and schism.

It is to the exertions of these excellent men, conducted with so much spirit, wisdom, and moderation, that we are to ascribe the mild proceedings of the papal partizans at the diet of Augsburg. In fact, that assembly did not meet till the month of November, and, from the advanced state of the season, and other causes, was but thinly attended. The diet was prorogued till the third of May of the next year, to be then held at Spires; and in the mean time, they entreated the emperor to take measures for calling a council, and to favor them with his presence in Germany; but so far from directing the edict of Worms to be enforced, they satisfied themselves with repeating the evasive decree of Nuremberg, which, in general, enjoined the clergy to introduce no novel doctrines, but to preach the pure gospel as it had been understood always by the great body of christians, to consult for peace and harmony, and do all to the glory of God. It does not appear that Ferdinand discovered any reluctance to subscribe the terms of the recess. The most violent and the most inveterate adversaries of Luther could not but see the danger and the folly of all attempts, under the present circumstances, either to banish or take away the life of a man who was so much admired and beloved by his countrymen; and to whose extraordinary discernment, industry, and courage, not only Germany, but also many other parts of Europe, were under the greatest obligations.

This appearance, however, of lenity and moderation was deceitful, being founded not in any solid principles of justice or religion, but merely in the temporary fear of tumult and sedition. Even during the sittings of the late diet, the ecclesiastical princes had shown themselves much elevated with the recent victories over the rebellious peasants, and consequently, more disposed to violent and sanguinary measures. Thus the present calm was considered, by the more judicious and thinking protestants, only as a prelude to a tempest, shortly to be raised by all the great powers of the established hierarchy, for the purpose of crushing effectually, not only the Saxon reformer and his petty adherents at Wittemberg, but every German prince and state, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which had dared to oppose or dissent from the communion of the Roman church.

Moreover, there were other reasons, besides those which have been mentioned, which would naturally fill the minds of the protestants with disquieting suspicions and apprehensions. So embittered was the court of Rome, against what they called the Lutheran heresy, that in every treaty which the pope had of late concluded with foreign powers, the absolute destruction and extirpation of all Lutherans was a specific article. For example, the ninth article of the treaty made by Clement VII. with the emperor, after the battle of Pavia and the capture of Francis I. runs thus: "Because religion, much more than any temporal concern, is near the heart of the Roman pontiff, and because the good faith of his holiness has been called in question, the emperor, the king of England, and the archduke Ferdinand, engage to take up arms with all their might against all disturbers of the catholic faith, and against all persons who shall revile or injure the pontiff; and further, the aforesaid princes take upon themselves to punish all such offenders against his holiness, in the same manner as if the offences had been committed against their own persons."

In the autumn of the very same year, this precious pontiff, whose thoughts, it seems, were so deeply and so entirely exercised concerning the advancement and protection of pure religion, deserted Charles V. and made a treaty with England and France, the primary object of which was declared to be, that the contracting parties should effectually withstand the brutal ferocity of the Turks, and also suppress that most pestilential heresy of the Lutherans; for that there was as much danger from the latter evil as from the former, the said heresy having secretly spread itself to a great extent, and done much mischief to the christian faith.

In the former treaty of peace, called the treaty of Madrid, by which Francis I. recovered his liberty, it is expressly stated, that the emperor and the king are induced to make peace, that they may be able to extirpate all the enemies of the christian religion, and especially the heretics of the Lutheran sect. The pope, they say, had often admonished and much solicited them to attend seriously to this important duty. It was, therefore, to satisfy his wishes that they had determined to entreat his holiness to give directions for a general council of the deputies of the kings and princes, to meet at a fixed time and place, then and there to consult on the most effectual method of carrying on the war against the Turks, and also of suppressing heresy.

How vigilant and indefatigable was this pontiff in rousing the adversaries of religion, and endeavoring to make them active and resolute in persecuting the little flock of true Christians, wherever they could find them! Among many of his epistolary admonitions and exhortations written for this purpose, there is one even to the parliament of Paris. He had been informed, he said, that impious heresies had begun to creep into France: and that the parliament had wisely interposed, by choosing commissioners for the detection and punishment of the offenders. He entirely approved, and by his authority confirmed, the steps they had taken: it was a common concern: the mischief was general, and was to be ascribed to the malice of Satan, and the fury of his impious agents. Not only religion, but also governments, kings, princes, nobles, all ranks and orders, were on the brink of destruction. It was a time when the common safety called for unanimous exertion. He promised that on his part no care or labor should be spared; and it was *their* duty, he told them to enter into the same views with their whole heart, and preserve their country from that calamitous infection, which infallibly attended the dissemination of this contagious heresy.

Another source of anxiety and alarm to the protestant confederate princes was the steady co-operation of Charles V. with the pope's tyrannical designs. Charles by mandate from Seville, March, 1526, directed his lieutenant general Ferdinand, and the rest of his commissioners, to admonish the members of the diet, who were about to assemble at Spires, to make no resolutions which were either contrary to the christian faith, or to the ancient usages. He himself had already abrogated the late decree of Nuremberg, which had enjoined an examination of Luther's writings; and would shortly concert measures with his holiness respecting a GENERAL council. The resolutions of those partial assemblies, he said, had done no good; but had rather confirmed the licentious vulgar in their errors; and that the diet would do well to regulate all their proceedings by their own common consent. He complained, that doctrines which had been condemned were still taught, holy men were reviled, and seditions encouraged.

This imperial mandate was intended by Charles V. for the public eye; but besides this, he caused private and secret instructions to be delivered to Henry duke of Brunswic, the general purport of which, as it soon became matter of notoriety, affected the minds of the good protestants with much greater concern than any public document could do, because it seemed most clearly to demonstrate the extreme hostility of the emperor's disposition towards any species of reformation. The duke was commissioned to visit several such princes of the empire as were known to be perfectly untainted with Lutheranism: for example, the archbishop of Cologne and Bremen, the bishop of Munster and Minden, the elector of Brandenburg, and several others. He was directed to show his instructions to some of them, to deliver civil messages from the emperor to others, and to make them all acquainted with how much grief his imperial highness had heard of the daily increase of the Lutheran heresy, which had already given rise to so much bloodshed, devastation and blasphemy. The duke was to add, that the steady adherence of these princes to the ancient religion had afforded the emperor the most lively satisfaction; and that his highness intended very shortly to advise with them in person, concerning the best remedies to be used in this most destructive distemper. He was then to declare, on the emperor's part, that he should not permit any other of his concerns to interfere with this: and lastly, he was to exhort the princes to persevere in the faith, to unite themselves with all the Antilutherans, and, in one connected body, to resist with effect, and finally to suppress, the cunning and deceitful arts, as well as the violent and seditious outrages of this mischievous faction. Charles concluded his instructions emphatically with saying, "That he should not be wanting in his endeavors to promote the good cause; that he heartily thanked those who had hitherto shown their zeal and fidelity; and he would not fail to reward their services liberally."

The precise manner in which these secret communications came to the knowledge of the Lutheran princes does not appear; but as copies of the memoir were sent to several other princes besides Henry of Brunswic, we need not wonder that its contents were soon divulged.

This secret memoir, there is reason to believe, contributed to produce some important consequences.—1. Distrust and animosity among the princes of the empire. In particular, the duke of Brunswic was suspected of having calumniated the Lutheran princes, and of having endeavored to poison the emperor's mind, by instilling a belief that the reformers made proselytes by using force; and moreover, that they were the real cause of the late rustic rebellion. 2. An entire despair of the emperor's justice and impartiality in any future attempt to adjust the religious differences. He lent his ear to slanderous reports, and afforded the accused no opportunity of justifying themselves. 3. It proved, that beyond all doubt, a treaty had been concluded against Christ and his sacred word. The landgrave, on the occasion of this conviction of his mind, declared solemnly, that he would rather lose his life than be forced in this manner into poverty and exile. 4. It showed the urgent and increased necessity of a counter treaty, for the purpose of confounding the machinations of all the adversaries of christian truth and liberty of conscience.

Undoubtedly the pope and the emperor were most to be dreaded, as the great engines of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution; nevertheless, it was now sufficiently clear, that there existed also, within the German empire many powerful agents, who were completely disposed to concur with those wicked despots in their destructive and sanguinary designs against the infant reformation.

For those very purposes, a secret treaty against the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse was discovered to have been made at Mayence, under the auspices and management of the duke George. Luther, whose vigilance and industry were unexampled, both acquired a knowledge of this conspiracy, and wrote a little treatise for the purpose of exposing the authors of it. It was, however, thought better to suppress the work; and at present there remain only some fragments of it in the German edition of Luther's works.

In a letter to Spalatinus, he alludes to these things in the following manner: "You can scarce believe what mischief Satan is plotting at this moment, through the medium of the bishops, with the duke George at their head. Shortly, in a little book, which is at this very time in the press, I purpose to give you a specimen of his iniquitous proceedings. If the Lord do not prevent the accomplishment of the designs of these men, you will have to say, that the late rebellion and slaughter of the rustics was but the prelude to the universal destruction of Germany. I therefore seriously beseech you to join your prayers with me to the Father of mercies, that he may be pleased to confound the wild and insidious devices of these men; especially of the duke George,—a deplorably lost character, I do fear. Let us beseech God, either to change his heart, or to remove him from among us: otherwise he will not only continue to rage like a wild beast, but, through the instigation of the prelates, will show himself a perfect Satan. It so torments the man that Luther is not yet put to death, that he can neither sleep nor wake; insomuch, that there may be some reason to fear, he will be worn out by the excessive anxiety of his mind on this very account. Gracious God! what a load has our good prince to sustain! not merely as the elector of Saxony, and an avowed friend of the reformers amidst numerous hostile princes, but also on account of the wicked machinations of some of his own familiars and intimates, persons of rank and consequence. I have abundance to tell you, concerning plots and evil counsels; but I dare not commit them to writing."

The real state of the reformation in Germany may be collected from such documents as these, infinitely better than from many chapters, filled with the imaginations and refinements of the most acute politicians. The curious student of ecclesiastical history will now see what just cause the protestant princes, especially John the Constant, elector of Saxony, and Philip the landgrave of Hesse, had for apprehending the most imminent danger to their dignity and property, and even their lives, from the fury and barbarity of papal superstition; and how necessary it was to form a well connected, defensive alliance, which might prove some protection and security against the impending storm. The diet of Spires was at hand; and if the antipapal princes should have met there without previous communication of sentiment, confusion, reserve, and imbecility, must have been the consequence, instead of unanimity, courage and strength. No time was therefore to be lost; the present moment seemed critical in the highest degree. Actuated by such views and principles, those resolute and spirited protestants, the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, met at Torgau, and there agreed upon a treaty of mutual defence, in opposition to the tyranny of the ecclesiastics. Their next step was to invite others to join in the alliance; and in a few weeks afterwards, at Magdeburg, they met together again, and again subscribed the same treaty, with the addition of a considerable number of princes, who followed their example.

The Magdeburg treaty, as it is called, does honor to the cause of the gospel, is worthy of the courageous christian characters who joined in it, and, as it seems to have been the foundation of the famous league which was afterwards formed at Smallcald, we shall give the substance of it here.

The federalists begin with praising God for his extraordinary providence, his grace, and his unspeakable mercy, in having bestowed upon them his sacred word, which is the only true comfort, the real food of the soul, and the greatest treasure in the world. They then proceed to relate the numerous and powerful machinations with which to the present moment they have been disturbed, especially by the clergy and their adherents, whose object it was to deprive the people of the use of the holy scriptures, and of those comforts which they afford to the heart and conscience.—They express a hope that God will continue to them this great blessing of the Bible. They were ready to have repaired to the late diet at Augsburg, there to treat concerning religion and harmony, but were prevented by the advanced season of the year. They had now the same intentions, in regard to the diet of Spires. They were convinced, they said, by the information which they received from all quarters, as also by the various meetings and discussions which had recently taken place, that factions were forming, leagues and treaties were entered into, and money collected; and all this, in the intention of maintaining by force the old abuses, of extinguishing the truths of Divine revelation, and of waging war against those princes and rulers who felt themselves bound in duty and conscience to profess and protect the gospel in their dominions, and who injured no person living, nor committed any acts of violence whatever. Impelled therefore by their own consciences and a sense of their duty to God, it was for the reasons above mentioned, that, without meaning to offend any one, they had mutually agreed upon a plan of pure defence against the war and violence with which they appeared to be threatened; and they hereby engaged to unite and exert every power they possessed against all those, who, under any pretence whatever, should attack them on account of their religion.

The diet did not assemble at Spires till near the end of June, 1526, but was unusually well attended. All the electors, except thsoe of Brandenburg, were present.

The elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse, during the deliberations of the members, appear to have preserved a steady attention to the very prudent project which they had recently formed; judging, it would seem, that they should serve the Lutheran cause more effectually by strengthening their TREATY OF DEFENCE, than by long arguments and debates on points of religion, before an assembly which contained so many bigoted ecclesiastics and selfish politicians. Accordingly they took occasion to address the deputies of Strasburg, Nuremberg, and Augsburg, on the subject of mutual defence. They were convinced, they said, of their love of the gospel; and there could be no doubt of the machinations of the prelates and other agents of the pope at the present time: Ought not therefore an association or an alliance to be formed on this principle: That if any one should be brought into difficulty or danger on account of religion, the federalists should support one another? they added, that as they had a good opinion of the cities of Frankfort and Ulm, it might be proper to ask them also to join in the confederacy: To this the deputies replied, They had no express instruction on that subject, but they promised to be particularly careful in reporting the proposal to their masters.

Several of the Lutheran divines were present at this diet, and were heard in explanation of the doctrines of the reformers; but not without much troublesome though ineffectual objection on the part of the papal princes, under the pretext of avoiding commotions. Ferdinand also made a smooth and plausible harangue to the deputies of all the states of the empire. "Himself, his brother the emperor, and the house of Austria, were bound to them by the ties of affection." He therefore warned them not to be led astray by the persuasions of certain persons; and finally exhorted them to exhibit a disposition to obey their lawful sovereign. But these mild terms, it is to be observed, were not used by Ferdinand till near the conclusion of the diet; when he had found, by experience, that neither himself, nor the imperial ministers, nor the bishops, had been able, by their menaces, to overawe those resolute and determined Germans.

At the opening of the diet, the emperor's representative informed the members, it was the pleasure of his imperial highness, that, in the first place they should proceed to determine the best method of securing the christian religion, and the ancient usages of the church; then, how they should punish offenders, and compel to obedience such as forcibly resisted their injunctions; also, how they could unite their mutual and effective efforts to procure the execution of the edict of Worms, which was now of five years standing. Upon this, the diet selected a committee, composed of bishops, secular princes, and leading senators, who should propose regulations for the adjustment of the religious differences. But the emperor's representatives interposed, by saying, that it would be most to the purpose for them to read to the diet the instructions which they had received from their master; this would best ensure obedience to him, and prevent that loss of time which the committee might otherwise spend on subjects to which their authority did not extend. They then read the emperor's mandate from Seville, as already given.

Most of the deputies answered, in writing, that it had been fully proved to the pope's legate, in a former diet, that it was then absolutely impossible to execute the edict of Worms, through fear of the commotions which would arise: that now the attempt was abundantly more difficult; because the religious disputes were daily increasing, especially about ceremonies and abuses: that the emperor, were he present, would form the same judgment. Moreover, in regard to the promise of a general council, that promise was made by the emperor when in treaty with his holiness; but that since the date of the emperor's letters, the pope had changed sides, and ordered his forces to act against his imperial majesty. What prospect then could there be of a general council? Under such circumstances, it was their opinion that the emperor's leave should be asked to call a provincial Germanic council; that either delay, or an attempt to execute the edict of Worms, was unspeakably dangerous; and that therefore, if his imperial majesty did not approve of the expedient of calling such a council, he should be entreated to dispense with the execution of the aforesaid edict, till a general council could be called.—Such, they said, had been the plan of the last diet of Nuremberg; and that since their intended convention at Spires had been interdicted by the emperor, the expectations of many of the states had been disappointed, and the disposition to tumult and civil war much increased. That, in fact, the rebellion of the peasants might have been avoided if attention had been paid to the representation of the grievances which the country suffered from the ecclesiastics. That in those districts where a reformation had taken place, the disturbances had been slight, and presently quieted. That they had made no changes whatever in that true and holy faith which was founded in Christ, and his eternal immutable word: neither had they rejected any ceremonies, but what were contrary to the scriptures. Lastly, they observed emphatically, that in a state of discord, uncertainty, and anxiety, respecting their own condition, men could not be much disposed to contribute their money liberally to the assistance of others.

After this, the deputies, in a distinct memorial ventured to point out certain practices, which they thought called for alteration or entire abolition. In every town, they said, the poor inhabitants were burdened with what were denominated mendicant monks. These stripped men of the comforts of life; and, in many cases, procured legacies and estates to be devised to them by dying persons. These things were mischievous to the last degree, and called loudly for correction. The ecclesiastics, also ought no longer to enjoy those immunities, for the granting of which the reasons now no longer existed. Also, the number of holidays ought to be lessened; the distinction of meats abolished; and, above all, the free course of the gospel should not be impeded.

Such bold and prudent remonstrances must have given the pontifical partizans an insight into the steady character of the German reformers. In particular, the elector of Saxony most strictly enjoined his counsellors to beware of the corrupt arts of the bishops and to stand inflexibly firm to the gospel. It was however chiefly, through the numerous suffrages of the towns and cities, and especially those of the higher Germany, that the reformers acquired so considerable an ascendant in this diet.

The leading ecclesiastics, who, had no other aim but the preservation of their own authority, maintained that during the discord between the emperor and the pope, it was impossible to come to any decisive conclusions respecting the religious dissentions; and that therefore that business had better be deferred to a more favorable juncture. No doubt they conceived, that, as dignified ecclesiastics, both their authority and their revenues would be more effectually supported by the pope, acting at a future time in concert with the emperor, than by the emperor alone in the present circumstances.

The members also of the select committee before mentioned differed so exceedingly among each other, and the opposition to any reformation was conducted with such prodigious heat and acrimony, that there seemed to be an end to all sober deliberation. Spalatinus' observation on what he saw at this diet is, that "Christ was extremely odious to the Pharisees." He adds, that neither the elector nor the landgrave were allowed to have their own chaplains in the churches; and that on this account these princes caused sermons to be preached in the vestibules of their hotels, where many thousands of people were collected together to hear the doctrines of the gospel.

Disgusted with such violent and unprincipled proceedings, and seeing no prospect of an amicable conclusion, these good princes and their adherents meditated to withdraw themselves from the diet, and return home. Ferdinand instantly took the alarm, convinced that, if the assembly should break up in their present state of animosity and exasperation, without making any decree, all Germany would be in a flame. He had moreover received recent information, that the Turks had advanced into Hungary, and also that France, England, and the Pope, were in treaty against the emperor. In this critical conjuncture he wisely determined to recommend moderation and harmony to the contending parties; and at length, by using gentle and soothing language, with the assistance of the archbishop of Treves, he seemed to have prevented a most mischievous rupture in the diet, and to have produced among its members a more pacific and pliable disposition. The difficulty still remained, to determine in what terms the decree or THE RECESS, should be expressed, so as to be sufficiently respectful to the emperor, and yet perfectly consistent with what had been proved, after long and warm altercations, to be the sentiments of a great majority of the deputies. At last, the reformers suggested the following expedient, which was consented to by the whole assembly; "That the welfare of religion, and the maintenance of the public peace, made it necessary that a general, or at least a national council, should be called, to commence within the space of a year; that the emperor should, by a solemn address, be requested to procure such a council; and that, in regard to ecclesiastical concerns and the edict of Worms, the princes and states should in the mean time, till either one or the other sort of council was called, undertake so to conduct themselves, in their respective provinces, as to give to God and to the emperor a good account of their administration.

Thus terminated, in a manner more advantageous to the Lutherans than they could have expected, the diet of Spires. The resolution of the RECESS, it is true, was but evasive; yet such were the existing circumstances, that a truce of this sort answered all the purposes which the most zealous friends of the reformation could desire. Their divines preached and wrote with greater confidence and less molestation; and the anti-papal dispositions increased both in strength and numbers. It was natural that those who already had rejected the Romish superstitions should proceed more vigorously, during such a season of liberty, in digesting and maturing their new systems of ecclesiastical government; and also, that several princes or states, who through timidity or danger had hitherto with reluctance continued in close communion with the establishment, should now grow cold in the cause they had long disliked, or perhaps renounce at once, if circumstances permitted them, that corrupt communion, and adopt the new model of worship and church government already made to their hands in the electorate of Saxony. And such, we are told, were the real effects of the ambiguous decree of the diet of Spires in 1526.

We have not yet mentioned how much the beauty and excellence of pure evangelical principles showed themselves at the diet of Spires, in the exterior conduct of the Lutheran princes. The landgrave of Hesse, about a week before the meeting of the diet, represented to John Frederic, the son of the elector, how necessary it was, that those, who pretended to be advocates for reformation of doctrine, should themselves be careful to exhibit examples of good moral conduct in their own families. He entreated the young prince to state this matter seriously to his father; and thereby prevent the debauchery, and drinking, and other vices, which usually took place at such public seasons, among the domestics and servants of the great. "How dreadfully scandalous," said he, "and how injurious, are such practices, to the cause of the gospel, and of the word of God! The princes ought to set their faces most earnestly against these inveterate and impious abuses; and, by so doing they would acquire both signal advantage and honor.—Nay," added he, "they must do so, unless they mean to bring on themselves the worst of evils, and even the loss of their own souls." The elector received the admonition like a good Christian, and enjoined his whole retinue to observe the most laudable regulations. And thus these good protestants and their families, who have been reviled by papal historians for breaking the Roman catholic rules concerning fasts and meats and drinks during their residence at Spires, were in fact adorning their profession, by temperance, soberness, and chastity.

The Reformation in Hesse by the Landgrave.

The ardent temper of Philip the landgrave of Hesse was a remarkable contrast to the cautious dilatory disposition of the late elector of Saxony. Unmoved by the pressing solicitations of the duke George his father-in-law, and also of his mother Anne of Mecklenburg, the landgrave immediately upon his return from the diet of Spires, earnestly endeavored to carry forward the reformation which in some degree was already begun in his dominions. Melancthon, who had been consulted on this occasion, attempted to check the fervor of this prince, by a letter full of good sense, yet favoring a little of the natural timidity of the writer. He advised him by all means, in the present critical times, to proceed by gradual advances, and never to lose sight of the grand distinction between things essential, and things in their very nature indifferent. The preachers on the side of the reformation, he said, were often as quarrelsome as the papists themselves, if not more so on some occasions; and frequently the difference was about mere trifles. A public teacher should not only inculcate faith, but also the fear of God, and universal charity and obedience to magistrates. He dreaded a civil war, and would rather die than live at such a time. The Romish ecclesiastics instigate to war; why do not the rest exhort men to gain a knowledge of the subject, and in the mean time to keep the peace? "Your highness," continued Melancthon, "I am convinced, might do a great deal with the princes, if you would exhort them to take pains to understand the several points in dispute, and endeavor to terminate the ecclesiastical contentions."

The landgrave, not quite satisfied with the lukewarm advice of Melancthon, and anxious to have the pure gospel of Christ taught in all the churches under his jurisdiction, appointed an ecclesiastical synod to be held at Hamburg in the month of October, 1526, for the express purpose of determining the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the reformation. Moreover, in this important business he was assisted by an excellent French divine, named Francis Lambert, who first composed a summary of pure evangelical doctrine and of the errors of the church of Rome, then published his propositions, and afterwards boldly presented himself before the synod and a great multitude of Hessians, as an advocate and defender of the system which he had submitted to the general inspection and judgment. The landgrave and his chancellor were present and allowed perfect freedom of discussion; but as no material opposition was made to the propositions of Lambert, and as they were completely Lutheran in their purport, it may be sufficient to conclude this article with a brief account of their author.

"There is no doubt," says Luther to Spalatinus, "of the integrity of Lambert: we have witnesses who heard him preach, both in France and at Basil; and they all give the man a good character. He is of a noble family, but has been a minor friar during the space of twenty years, and is now a poor persecuted exile for having been faithful to the word of God. At present he is with us at Wittemberg; and though we have no want of lecturers, we shall endeavor to employ him. He pleases me in all respects; and I am satisfied he is one who deserves a little help from us in his poverty; but you, who know that I live at the expense of other persons, must also know that I have not an income to support him. It might not be amiss for you to persuade the prince not to lose this good man, but in christian charity to afford him some small assistance till he can support himself either by his own industry, or by what he may receive from his relations."

Another author of unquestionable veracity describes this same Frenchman to be a person who excelled in piety, genius, and learning, and who was able powerfully to convince gainsayers and stop their mouths. During his residence at Wittemberg, he wrote comments on the prophets, on Solomon's song, and the gospel of St. Luke, and dedicated them to the elector. He seems to have agreed with Luther in all the fundamental points in religion. In his twenty-second proposition at Homburg, he thus speaks of faith and justification: "We are not justified by a mere historical faith; but by a real lively trust in God, and this without any works of obedience even to the law of God: much less then are we justified by any works of our own contrivance. Such a faith, however, is always fruitful, and produces a willing obedience: it also makes a man free; yet not free so as to be absolved from obedience to magistrates. Neither can it possibly be, that a faithful soul should abuse true christian liberty. The man who does abuse it, is not in possession of true christian faith."

Under the auspices of an adviser like Lambert, we need not wonder that the new system of doctrine and discipline which the landgrave promoted in Hesse had all the principal features of the reformation in Saxony. Soon after the synod of Homburg, he ordered the monks and nuns to leave the monasteries, and by means of their revenues he founded several hospitals, and also an university at Marpurg. He directed the images to be taken out of the churches, and appointed faithful ministers in each of them; and among his various new institutions, he remembered to fix the poor exile Lambert in the professorship of Marpurg, where the good man died at an advanced age, in the year 1530.

Luther's sentiments respecting war and defence.—His labors.

During these transactions, and while the labors of the reformers were crowned with such signal success, Martin Luther, who was never behind any of them in zeal, industry, and exertion, exhibited to the world a brilliant specimen of the purity of his principles, and of his entire submission to the injunctions of the gospel. We have already seen that the accession of the landgrave to the Lutheran cause had considerable influence in Germany. The gentle, pacific decree of the diet of Spires is a proof of this; and so is the commencement of a defensive confederacy, and the progress made in that prudent measure. But it was not without difficulty, it should seem, that this bold and enterprising prince, in the vigor of youth, and conscious of the goodness of his intentions, could be restrained within the limits of defensive operations.—John the Constant, however, under the direction of a sounder discretion, and probably of a more scrupulous conscience, checked this hasty disposition to take up arms, and in the mean time consulted Luther on the momentous practical question OF RESISTANCE. As this very circumstance evinces the high estimation in which our reformer was then held as a sage divine and an honest casuist, the reader will do well to consider, whether the answers which he gave on this occasion correspond to the opinion undeniably prevalent at that time, respecting his superior wisdom and integrity.—The following judgment of Luther was conveyed to the elector through the medium of his chancellor Pontanus. "That the elector of Saxony had no superior but one, namely, the emperor; and that therefore he was justified in defending his own subjects, and also in repelling any violent acts of his adversaries among the princes. That if the ecclesiastical princes, or their allies, should pretend to have the emperor's orders, the elector was not bound to believe them; that he had a right to presume such orders to be surreptitious; for that Charles V. was in Spain, and that his letters to the elector breathed nothing but kindness and peace. That if the edict of Worms should be made the pretext, the answer should be: It was notorious that that edict was fabricated without the consent of the princes, and against the consent of the leading ones; that the prelates, and they only, had concurred in it; that it had in fact been abrogated by the decrees of Nuremberg and of Spires; therefore all attempts of the princes and states to execute the said edict were unjust, and might be resisted with a good conscience."

The nice and delicate question remained still to be answered. What was to be done, supposing the emperor should avowedly arm the adverse party with his authority?—A puzzling question this; and which probably has never yet received, nor can receive, a better answer than Luther gave to it:

"That the elector and his friends would still be at liberty to protest and remonstrate; that in that way the rights of the princes might be preserved, and the fraudulent practices of their adversaries detected; and that in every event, TIME WOULD BE GAINED BY THIS STEP:—and lastly," says Luther, "God will take care of the rest."

He then deprecates, in the strongest terms, every idea of commencing an offensive war, or any war otherwise than against aggressors, agreeably to the grand rule, "They that take the sword, shall perish by the sword." Lastly, he concludes with these remarkable words:

"If the landgrave will not act consistently with these principles, but will at all events have recourse to arms, it will be better for the elector to dissolve the alliance at once. But not so, in case force should be used against the elector, or the landgrave, or their allies; they will then have a right to repel force by force."

There is no part of Luther's character which appears to have been less understood, or more misrepresented, than that of his quiet, peaceable disposition as a citizen and in general a member of civil society.—From the strong language which he often uses against popish abuses and corruptions, and from the vigorous efforts he made to correct or reform them, he has been too hastily pronounced to be a man of a turbulent and seditious stamp.

There is, however, an abundance of testimonies produced in various parts of this volume, which must prove satisfactorily that there is no ground whatever for such an opinion; and moreover, that the contrary is the truth: but these testimonies have been almost entirely either suppressed or disregarded by modern historians.

The same valuable memoir contains another piece of admirable advice which Luther gave the elector, namely; that his highness would do well, seriously and in writing, to admonish his clergy of their neglect of duty, and to tell them, that this was so very great, as to have compelled him to take the matter into consideration himself; that the salvation of men's souls as well as the peace of the community, in these times of dispute and contention, imperiously required him to ensure better instructions from the pulpit: And, as a clear proof that these were the sole objects of his present monition, he should content himself with earnestly entreating them to promote among his subjects pure evangelical doctrine, and to cultivate a spirit of tranquillity and concord; but that if, after all, they should fail to do this, he would no longer run the hazard of tumults in his dominions; he would no longer bear their neglect and opposition to the gospel, nor any longer be a partaker in their guilt.

At the conclusion of this wise counsel, Luther adds a remarkable clause, to this effect:

"I have persuaded myself that such a step on the part of the elector may be useful, by demonstrating to mankind the purity of the motives of the reformers, and by affording comfort afterwards to their own consciences, in the reflection that they can say truly,—"Nothing, which was not directly opposite to the word of God, was left untried for the prevention of a rupture with the superior clergy."

It may not be improper in this place to give a brief account of Luther's sentiments concerning the war with the Turks. The Hungarian ambassadors had been at the late diet of Spires, to solicit assistance against them; but through the excessive folly and presumption of Lewis II. king of Hungary, Solyman, who was then invading his kingdom at the head of 300,000 men, obtained a decisive victory in the plains of Mohacz, on the 29th of August, 1526, only two days after the recess of the diet. In this fatal battle the flower of the Hungarian nobility perished, with upwards of 20,000 men; and Lewis was drowned in his flight. The victorious sultan, after overrunning Hungary, penetrated into Austria, and even besieged Vienna. This progress of the infidels was truly alarming; and an indistinct notion prevailed, that the reformers thought it wicked to fight against the Turks. In such circumstances it became the duty of a man who possessed the power of directing the judgment of so many thousands of the inhabitants of Germany, to speak plainly, and to rectify such misconceptions as might prove injurious to the safety of his country. The duty of a christian soldier was a point which Luther had deeply considered; and in forming conclusions on the subject, he constantly rested with an implicit obedience on what he conceived to be the Divine will, as revealed in scripture:

It was in the year 1529, when the enemy was even at the door, that our author published, in the German language, a little tract for the purpose of rousing his countrymen to take up arms in the common defence. In this performance he chides severely the common people, who, he understood, had shown themselves so ignorant and barbarous as to express wishes for the success of the Turks; and at the same time he blames the preachers for having dissuaded their congregations from being concerned in this war, and for representing the profession of arms as unlawful. It was painful to him to find himself calumniated as the cause of the present irruption of the infidels, as he had been also of the rebellion of the peasants; but there was no ground whatever for the charge. He did not deny, he said, that formerly he had maintained, "That to fight against the Turks was to fly in the face of God himself, who was visiting us for our sins; and that this was one of the positions which had been selected from his writings, and condemned in the bull of Leo X. But he asked, what were the existing circumstances at that time? The dignity of magistrates and governors was oppressed and held in no estimation; and the pope exercised an usurped domination over all the princes. He affirmed that he himself was the first who had opened men's eyes on that subject, to the great satisfaction of the late elector Frederic. In fact, the war with the Turks was then the war of the pope; it was an offensive war, and a war founded on no good principle: it was made a pretence for exhausting Germany of its money by the sale of indulgences: and no penitence or amendment of life, without which it is in vain to hope for success in war, was so much as thought of. Moreover, it was at the same time pretended to be the peculiar duty of christians to take up arms against the infidels; whereas he scrupled not to profess an opinion directly opposite. He conceived, that the duties of men, considered as christians, consisted in things of a very different nature; and that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world. Still less had the pope and the clergy to do with wars and no success could be expected where bishops and priests neglected their proper functions, and gave attention to military concerns. He had been told, on good authority, that Francis I. well deserved his late defeat at Pavia, for having made an alliance with the pope, and taught his army to view the contest in which they were engaged, as the cause of THE CHURCH, and to use the word CHURCH as a watch-word.

Further, had there really existed, at the time above mentioned, any threatening symptoms of war, Luther said, he would have taken care to have made his meaning more clear and distinct. At present, the circumstances were very much altered: the war was strictly defensive; the enemy had no just ground for waging war at all against the christians; and their object was purely plunder and murder. Such an invader might be resisted with a good prospect of success, even by christians with the emperor at their head. But then the christian soldier ought seriously to turn to God in prayer, both public and private, and no longer lay stress on processions, private masses, and invocations of saints. The emperor also should not wage the war to gratify ambition and the thirst for glory, but consider himself as the leading prince, and as placed in that situation by Almighty God, to discharge well the great duty of conducting the defensive operations of the people. All the princes ought to view the matter in the same light, and no longer contend in the diets for precedence, or consume their incomes in luxury. These also, said he, are the points upon which the pope's legates ought strenuously to insist at the meetings of the diets, instead of squabbling with Luther about fastings and the marriages of the monks. There appears throughout this little work much of the author's native candor and vigor of mind, and of his reverence for the written word.

It was to be expected, from the active spirit of Luther, that he should employ to some important purpose that precious interval of tranquillity which the church enjoyed after the diet of Spires. The regulation and improvement of the liturgies and rites of those churches which had embraced the new doctrinal system of the reformers was an object well worthy the serious attention of that able pilot who had safely conducted his vessel through so many shelves, and rocks, and tempests. He proceeded in this business with the utmost caution and modesty : he published the new mode of administering the sacrament, adopted in the last year at Wittemberg: but in his preface he says, "Far be from me the affectation of requiring other persons either to follow our example, or to alter any good formularies at present in use. The plan here proposed has its merits; but I am in no wise prejudiced in its favor to the exclusion of others."—In the next place he provided homilies to be read by such ministers as had not the gift of preaching; a very necessary precaution, while evangelical knowledge was at so low an ebb. He also recommended the study of the Latin tongue throughout the dominions of the elector of Saxony, that there might be men capable of instructing foreign nations; lest, like the Waldenses in Bohemia, they should not be able to communicate christian information to any who did not understand the language of their teachers. Further; the catechising of youth was one of Luther's favorite objects: then the exposition of the creed, of the Lord's prayer, and of the ten commandments, he insisted on as of the highest moment; and thus, by the use of moderate and conciliatory methods, though the advances towards perfection were gradual, the public order of religion, through the indefatigable labors of this eminent servant of God, in no great length of time wore a new aspect in Saxony, to the unspeakable benefit of that country.

Persecutions of the Reformers.

The blessed calm which the church enjoyed after the diet of Spires, must not be understood to have extended beyond those provinces and districts which were under the jurisdition of such princes and governors as were favorable to the propagation of christian truth and liberty. In Bohemia and Hungary, Ferdinand, now king of both countries, raged against the Lutherans with all the fury which papal ignorance and superstition, exasperated by opposition, could inspire. The rigor of the persecution in Bohemia may be inferred from a single instance. A person named Nicholas Tornar, and a widow of sixty years, named Clara, suffered death in the flames with christian fortitude, merely because they denied their belief in the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament.

In Germany also, two remarkable instances of martyrdom are recorded. 1. John Huglin, minister of Lindau, was directed by the bishop of Constance to recant the christian faith; and on refusal, was treated precisely as John Huss had been, that is, degraded in the most abusive language, and then delivered over to the secular power. This man, while he was preparing for the fire, sang several songs of praise with the utmost cheerfulness. 2. Peter Spongler had nothing laid to his charge, except that he had been heard to lament the blindness of the papists, and to exhort their clergy to read their bibles. By stealth he was hurried away to Friburg, delivered over to the council of regency at Ensishem, and by them condemned to be held under water till he was dead.

At Munich, the capital of Bavaria, George Carpenter was burnt alive in 1527; because he refused to subscribe to the Romish corruptions. This sufferer, when some of his pious brethren requested him to give them, while in the flames, some sign of the firmness of his mind, answered in these memorable words, "Let this be looked upon by you as the most certain sign of the steadiness of my faith; that as long as I am able to open my mouth, or even to mutter, I will never cease to praise God, and confess the name of our Redeemer:" and it is said, the man kept his word.

But one of the most affecting stories of this kind is the martyrdom of Leonhard Cæsar, in the same year 1527. He was born in Bavaria; and having begun to preach the gospel, was summoned to Passau, to answer for his conduct; and there, by imprisonment and menaces, was at length induced to recant, and was dismissed to his parish and allowed to officiate again. Leonhard, however, was so upbraided by his conscience and inwardly ashamed of his unfaithfulness, that, in about six months, he quitted his station, and visited Wittemberg and other places where evangelical liberty flourished. After two years absence, hearing that his father was at the point of death, he ventured to return to his own country, where the minister of the village betrayed him; and Leonhard was carried to Passau, and there imprisoned during ten weeks before he underwent the least examination. At length, when reduced to a very weak condition, he was called upon to answer hastily to a variety of questions, read to him by the famous Eckius of Ingolstadt, who had been sent for on purpose to interrogate, confound and overawe the poor heretic. His own relations earnestly solicited him to retract; but finding THAT in vain, they begged he might be allowed to have an advocate, and also a month's respite to recruit his feeble debilitated frame. All was refused by the popish rulers; and Leonhard was brought publicly before a solemn tribunal of the bishop and a number of canons, with Eckius among them. Then it was that the persecuted prisoner, armed with Divine strength rose more formidable to the powers of darkness, than if through infirmity, he had never been guilty of a former lapse in denying the faith. His adversaries peremptorily ordered all the proceedings to be carried on in Latin, for the purpose of keeping the multitude in ignorance. But Leonhard scrupled not before the whole audience to speak German repeatedly, and to defend the doctrines he professed with prodigious spirit and animation. He was frequently interrupted by the official of the court, and told that he was not brought there TO PREACH. The grand protestant doctrines were the articles he maintained. "Faith alone," said he, "justifies: works are the evidences of faith; but in the act of justification, works are as distinct from faith as heaven is from the earth. The mass is no sacrifice; neither is there any sacrifice for sin, except the blood of Christ." He refused to enter into any dispute about transubstantiation; and contended, that it was enough to insist on the words of Christ, and to believe, that faithful communicants become real partakers of his body and blood.

This good martyr wrote from his prison to his friend Stifelius, at that time chaplain to a lady of distinction in Austria, in strains of the most unaffected piety, thanking God who had honored, as he called himself, his most unworthy servant, and the greatest of sinners, with such an opportunity to confess his precious name, blessed forever. He entreated his dear brother in Christ to pray for him, that he might remain steadfast to the end. Much pains were taken to procure his release and dismission. Noblemen of the first distinction, even the elector of Saxony himself, interceded with the potentates of Bavaria, but all to no purpose. The popish hierarchy proceeded to degrade him, and then gave him up to the civil magistrate; but not without first going through the usual mockery of praying that his life might be spared. His mournful relations, entirely against his own wishes, made their last effort to obtain the poor favor, that their kinsman might be allowed to die by the sword instead of the flames. But the stern duke of Bavaria, instigated no doubt by his priests, issued a peremptory mandate "for committing the incorrigible heretic alive to the flames."

The man's patience, and his constancy in prayer, the ardor of his soul, and his confidence towards God, are described as beyond belief. When the dreadful moment came and he was placed on the pile, he said, "O Lord Jesus, partake in my sufferings; support me, give me strength;" and, lastly, as soon as the fire began to burn, he cried out with a loud voice, "Save me Jesus; I am thine!" and soon after expired. Luther was vehemently affected with this tragedy; and professed himself ashamed, as he had done on former occasions, that he had not yet been thought worthy of martyrdom. "Oh," said he, "that I might witness such a confession, and suffer such a death! But God's will be done! Oh, ye persecutors, if ye thus thirst after blood and carnage, why do ye not turn your arms against the Turks? For after all, ye cannot oppress the cause of God. I gave you Gamaliel's advice when I was before the emperor at Worms: but all is in vain."

To their common friend, Stifelius, he speaks thus of the death of Leonhard. "Oh wretched me, how far below this man am I! I am a wordy preacher, he a powerful performer. May Christ grant that we may be enabled to imitate this holy character!"

CHAPTER VIII.

The Views which Luther had of himself.

NOTWITHSTANDING the uncommon success with which the labors of Luther had been crowned, the celebrity of his character, the favor of princes and nobles toward him, and the admiration in which he was held by all the professors of evangelical truth, were circumstances which had a strong tendency to exalt him in his own eyes, especially when the native firmness of his temper, is taken into the account; yet, when in his closet, in his conversations with his intimates, with his parish priest, or with his wife, or when his fellow-laborers vexed and irritated him by their opposition, or when his own health and spirits were broken down by insessant toils, and cares, and watchings; this hero of the reformation was more or less, according to circumstances, in a state of imbecility and confusion of mind, and even of fear, anxiety, complaint, and tribulation, on account of the discoveries which he, at such times, often had, of the sinfulness of his own heart, when he appears to have suffered much from the buffetings of Satan.

That such seasons of inward distress and conflict, were humbling seasons to this great and good man; appears from one of his letters to his friend Justus Jonas. "My sins have brought upon me the heavy wrath of God. It is not enough, that the pope, the emperor, the princes, and bishops, should aim at my life, but my religious brethren also must torment my spirit. My sins, and all the powers of death, Satan and his angels rage without ceasing. And what is my hope? I say, if Christ should forsake me I am undone. But he never will forsake such a poor miserable sinner. Mine enemies are mighty, and add affliction to affliction, now that I am under the Divine chastisement. But enough; let me not be querulous or impatient under the rod of him, who smites and heals; who kills and makes alive. Blessed be his holy will! When the world and the prince of the world hate me in this manner, it is surely some proof that I belong to Christ. The critical situation of my wife increases my anxiety,* and I am quite alarmed at what has just happened to another pregnant lady, one of our neighbors, whom you know. She has been carried off rapidly by the prevailing epidemic. My present trials are great; but the All-powerful One has done great things for me. May Christ, whose pure doctrine I have taught and openly avowed, be my rock and my fortress!—Amen."

To his friend Amsdorf he writes thus: "It so pleases God, that I, who have been accustomed to comfort others, do myself stand in need of consolation. I have but one prayer, and I beseech you join with me in it: That whatever Christ may be pleased to do with me, he would preserve me from ungratefully rebelling against him, whom I have hitherto preached and served with so much zeal; though at the same time I have offended him by many and great sins. I still hope he will forgive me, and say, 'I am thy salvation."

To another friend, Luther writes thus; "There is nothing that my sins do not deserve; but nevertheless I have comfort in the thought that I have taught the gospel of Christ in godly sincerity to the salvation of many souls. This galls Satan; and he would destroy me with the WORD itself. While others are called to the stake by the cruel tyrants, I suffer internally in spirit from the prince of this world. May the Father or our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in me his holy will! Oh! how precious and delightful is the secret contemplation of that will!"

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* An infectious disorder, attended with great mortality, prevailed at this time, at Wittemberg.

The truth of the history of Luther's extreme sufferings, at such seasons, does not depend entirely on the descriptions of his feelings contained in his own letters to his friends. His friends, Bugenhagius and Justus Jonas, were present during one of the seasons of his sorest distress; and were so much affected by what they saw and heard, that they thought fit to record in writing some of the most material circumstances.

It appears however clear, that intense distress and agitation of spirit had laid hold of our reformer, more than six months before that very remarkable seizure which they described. For he writes thus to Jonas on the 26th of Dec. 1526: "O, my Jonas, pray for me; sympathize with me in the agonies I undergo. The temptation is sometimes less, but returns again with greater fury. May Christ never forsake me! May he chastise me as a son, but not punish me as a rebel: May I be strong in faith, even unto the end."

The narratives of Bugenhagius and Jonas relate to what happened on the sixth of the succeeding July, when the mind of Luther must of necessity have been much broken down by the length and accumulation of his afflictions. To transcribe the whole might detain us too long; but some remarkable passages well deserve notice.

Their account is this, namely: That about eight o'clock in the morning of Saturday the sixth of July, Bugenhagius was alarmed at being hastily sent for by Luther. He found him, however, in conversation with his wife, and looking just as usual. It seems he had that morning experienced a most tremendous temptation, entirely of a spiritual nature; and was seriously apprehensive, that if the hand of God should again be so heavy upon him, he could not survive the attack. On the whole, he suspected he was about to die;

and retired privately with his friend Bugenhagius, the parish minister, into his chamber, and there, in secret, committed every thing to God, and solemnly confessed his sins; and then, says the writer, my MASTER entreated me, his PUPIL, to give him a word of consolation from the scriptures. Afterwards he recovered so far as to be able to go out to dinner, and make the company cheerful, as he always did. But in the evening he was suddenly seized with a fainting fit; and cried out, "O, doctor Jonas, I am sick; bring me water, or whatever you have, or I am gone." Jonas in a fright snatched up some cold water, and threw it freely over him. At that moment Luther was the very picture of death; but presently after, he began to pray most intensely. "If this be my last hour, O Lord, thy will be done! O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger; chasten me not in thy heavy displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord. I would willingly have shed my blood in the cause of thy word—but perhaps I was unworthy of that honor; thy will be done: only may thy name be glorified, whether by my death, or my life."

Then, in the most solemn manner, he recommended to the blessing of God, the ministry of that sacred gospel, which had hitherto been committed to his charge. Upon which, Bugenhagius, almost senseless from deep and anxious concern, interrupted him by saying, "Among your other prayers, my doctor, let this be one, that it would please God to continue your life for the good of us poor creatures, and of many others." "To die, replied Luther, would be gain to me, but . . . . ." and then, without finishing the sentence, he thus seriously addressed Justus Jonas and Bugenhagius. "The world delights in falsehoods; and it will certainly be said, that I recanted my doctrines in the hour of death. I desire, therefore, YOU and Bugenhagius to be witnesses of this my confession of faith. I am perfectly satisfied that the doctrines which I have taught, concerning faith, charity, the cross, and the sacraments, are verily agreeable to the word of God. I was led by Providence and not voluntarily, to act the part which I have acted in the ministry. Many have blamed me for having been deficient in moderation ; however, in some instances, there was in me no want of moderation but what may be justified ; and most assuredly, I have never intended harm to any person whatever. On the contrary I have always wished to promote men's salvation, even the salvation of mine enemies."

After this, Luther gravely stated to the same persons his objections to the sacramentarians ; calling God to witness the sincerity of his heart, and lamenting with tears the numerous sects that arose, and neither spared the flock nor the word of God.—" What a bustle," said he, " will they raise after my death!! AND THEN, WITH DEEP SIGHS, AND A VAST EFFUSION OF TEARS, HE CONFESSED HOW INTEMPERATE HE HAD BEEN AT TIMES IN HIS LANGUAGE ; and appealed to HIM who KNOWS ALL THINGS, that in THIS HE HAD GIVEN WAY to the infirmity of the flesh, thereby endeavoring to shake off the burden of his afflictions : but that his conscience did not reproach him with having harbored any ill will.

" Be ye my witnesses, however," said he, turning his face towards his two friends, " that on the subjects of repentance and justification, I recant nothing of what I have written against the pope. I feel that to be the gospel of God, and the truth of God ; and though some may think I have been too harsh, or taken too great liberty, I do not repent in that matter."

Luther then began to enquire after his child.—" Where is my dearest little John ? The child was soon brought smiling to the father, who immediately commended ' his good little boy,' as he called him, and his mother, ' his dearest Kate,' to a good and gracious God. " Ye have no worldly goods," said he, " but God, who is the Father of the orphan, and judges the cause of the widow, will defend and keep you. I give thanks to thee, O Lord God, that thy providence has made me indigent in this world. I have neither house nor land nor possession to leave. Thou hast blessed me with a wife and children, and these I return back unto thee; O feed them, teach them, preserve them!

To his wife he said, "My dearest Kate, if it is God's will, I request thee to submit to it; thou art my wedded wife: this thou wilt never forget; and let God's word be thy constant guide." He proceeded to say something to her concerning a few silver cups; and concluded with these words, "You know we have nothing else."

His wife displayed, on this trying occasion, extraordinary Christian fortitude. Almost heart broken, and frightened even to consternation, she yet preserved a good hope in her countenance. She allowed that not only herself and her child, but many other Christian people, would experience a great loss; but she entreated her husband not to be uneasy on her account; for if it really was God's will that he should depart, she could submit to it cordially. She therefore commended him to the Lord God, under whose protection he could not fail to be safe.

By the external application of warmth, and by the use of cordial medicines internally, Luther soon recovered from the apparently immediate danger; but such had been the violence of the paroxysm, that he experienced the debilitating effects of it during the remainder of the year.

On the Sunday succeeding this memorable Saturday, Luther declared to Jonas, that on comparing the agony of his mind, during the spiritual temptation in the morning of the preceding day, with his bodily afflictions in the evening, the latter had not been half so distressing as the former. He added, "Doctor, I must mark the day. I was yesterday at school."

Afterwards he underwent many exacerbations of mind of a similar nature to that described, but none equally severe, Yet during all these trials, Bugenhagius assures us, that Luther attended to every part of his duty, that he seldom omitted his public lectures, and generally preached on the Lord's day. Bugenhagius was frequently called during the hours of the night, to visit him in his distress; and repeatedly heard him say, "The violence of the temptation so stupifies me that I cannot open my mouth; as soon as ever it pleases God that I can lift up my heart in prayer and make use of scriptural expressions, it ceases to prevail."

Burgenhagius tells us, that he found real satisfaction in being of some little service to Luther through whose instrumentality, God had been pleased to reveal to himself the gospel of his Son.

CHAPTER IX.

Further state of the Reformation. Luther's views on predestination. Conference at Marpurg. Luther and Zuingle compared.

NEVER was the maxim that religious sentiments are not to be eradicated by persecution, more strikingly verified, than in the case of the rebellious fanatics. In almost every part of Europe, princes and magistrates used the utmost severity in punishing those sectarian teachers, and in preventing the dissemination of their tenets. All good governments truly had reason to dread the ill effects resulting from the progress of the anabaptists; for they taught the people to despise their lawful rulers, and the salutary regulations by which all communities exist. Every where it was the cry of those visionaries, "No tribute—all things in common—no tithes—no magistrates—the kingdom of Christ is at hand; the baptism of infants is an invention of the devil!" Neither the sword, nor fire, nor the gibbet, could induce them to recant.

But to all the attempts made by persecution to suppress the nascent evils arising from those fanatics, Luther was firmly opposed. Zuingle too conducted toward them in a manner truly Christian in the commencement of his disputes with the anabaptists in 1525.

Those artful proselytes of Munzer first in a clandestine manner insinuated to the minds of the people, that the reformation, which had taken place among them through the instrumentality of Zuingle, was in its whole plan contracted and inefficient, and neither deep nor finished, nor sufficiently spiritual. After this they addressed Zuingle himself in grave and imposing language, reproaching him with managing the business of religion in a slow and frigid manner; and declaring, that now was the time for the real children of God to separate from the rest of their countrymen as they did in the days of the apostles; that the Spirit of God was at work, and unless men were more in earnest there was no hope of their salvation: that the senate of Zurich were at present a motley assembly; but that a church, where all were pious members, would not fail to choose a pious senate. Zuingle replied to this statement in the kindest manner; that there always would be a mixture of good and bad; that Christ had directed the tares and the wheat not to be separated till the time of harvest; that the example of the apostles did not apply to the present times, when all men professed themselves to be Christians; whereas the secession of those days was that of believers from unbelievers: that a secession under the existing circumstaces, he feared, would excite much disturbance; and, that as there was no necessity for so violent a measure, he could not look upon it as suggested by the Spirit of God. He added, that he was far from thinking so ill of the senate as they seemed to do; for that whatever defects they might have, they heartily favored the gospel of Christ. Lastly, he particularly recommended it to the consideration of persons who seemed to be aiming at a church of perfect purity, to reflect, that of the ten virgins who went to meet the bridegroom, only five were wise and provident."

When these enthusiasts were no longer able to withstand the solid arguments of Zuingle, they began to unfold their designs more distinctly, by insisting on the necessity of adult baptism in all cases, and by establishing rebaptization as the criterion of the genuine members of the visible church of Christ. The senate did their utmost to terminate the disputes; first, by procuring amicable conferences to be held between Zuingle on one side, and Manzius, an anabaptist leader, on the other; and then by directing the parties to keep the peace. The anabaptists declared they must obey God rather than men. Another fruitless conference took place; after which, the malcontents became furious and extravagant in the extreme. They flew to the city in vast swarms; abused Zuingle, calling him the Old Dragon, rebaptized the people in the streets, boasted of having all things in common, and threatened destruction to every one who refused to follow their example. They also prophesied—and cried, Wo to Zurich! Wo to Zurich! Repent, or perish! Some of them, like Jonah, allowed the city forty days for repentance; and now, instead of defending their doctrine from scripture, they cried, they were ready to seal the truth with their own blood.

In this prodigious agitation of men's minds, the senate proclaimed a freedom of public discussion, in consequence of which, every one had full leave to hear and be heard for three whole days together. Lastly, when this measure had failed to produce peace and tranquillity, Zuingle obtained permission to have, on November the sixth, A GENERAL and SOLEMN conference in the great church, where the points in dispute were again contested for the space of three days. At length, a certain anabaptist suddenly jumped up, and adjured Zuingle by the living God to own the truth; for the man had persuaded himself, that Zuingle, in secret, favored anabaptism. Zuingle, with acuteness and promptitude, answered, I will; and I say then, *you are the ringleader of the seditious rustics in this district.* Instantly there was a loud laugh, and the anabaptist held his peace.

After this *conference*, the senate warned the people to desist from the practice of rebaptizing. But all was in vain. They decreed therefore, that in future, all persons who professed anabaptism, or harbored the professors of that doctrine, should be punished with death.

These things happened in 1525. Manzius, nevertheless, in defiance of the new law, and at the hazard of his life, ventured to rebaptize not a few within the jurisdiction of Zurich. He was apprehended by the order of the magistrates, and drowned in the river, on January the fifth, 1527. A little before his execution, he praised God that he was permitted to seal the truth by his death. He said, the death of the faithful was predicted by Christ. Both the mother and the brother of Manzius exhorted him to finish his course with firmness; and they had the satisfaction of hearing him sing with a loud voice, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

A very able and learned protestant historian‡ of the reformation informs us, that Manzius and his associate Grebel, were both men of learning, who quarrelled with Zuingle about infant baptism; and moreover, that Manzius was drowned at Zurich UPON THE SENTENCE PRONOUNCED BY ZUINGLE in these four words, Qui iterum mergit, mergatur; that is, he that re baptizes with water, let him be drowned in the water. It is a lamentable truth, that more tragedies of this kind were performed about the same time, which provoked the memorialists of those days, to exclaim, "This procedure is very strange; the Zuinglians themselves are scarce out of the reach of persecutors; the fires in which their fellow believers were burnt, are still daily smoking. Most of them condemned the execution of heretics, when it effected themselves, and yet they practise the very same cruelties as soon as they are possessed of power. Thus do they do to others, what they would not wish to have done to themselves.—OTHERS employ FIRE; THEY employed WATER.

Those that knew better things, ought to have done better; neither were they actuated by a good spirit, that could lead the wanderer into the ditch, instead of setting him in the right way; they could drown the infected, instead of washing and cleansing him; or could burn the blind, instead of restoring him to the light."

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‡ Rev. Gerard Brandt, professor of divinity, and minister to the protestant remonstrance at Amsterdam.

Expostulations of this kind will not fail, in our days at least, to affect every heart with a mixture of pain and indignation, and we may add of anxiety also, to know whether such a character as Zuingle was really involved in the perpetration of such barbarities.

1. This reformer owns that he was calumniated by the anabaptists, as being the cause why the senate of Zurich had proscribed and banished them from the whole canton. At the same time he appeals to his accusers themselves, whether in their own presence he had not entreated the magistrates not to pass any severe edicts against them.

This positive testimony of a conscientious Christian, had almost convinced me that the historian, Brandt, had been deceived by the want of discrimination in the Dutch authors whom he follows, till further reflection and a nicer scrutiny into the dates of the several transactions, and also a comparison of different parts of the writings of Zuingle, remove the doubts in the following satisfactory manner.

2. Every person conversant in the Swiss history of those times, must be aware of the entire ascendant which Zuingle had then obtained over the magistrates of Zurich in ecclesiastical concerns. Absolutely unbounded were their love and admiration of their countryman, to whose wisdom and courage they were so much indebted for christian liberty; and there is no doubt, that, in general, he well deserved all their confidence and best affections. This circumstance therefore renders it very improbable, that the senate in the exercise of their ecclesiastical jurisdiction, should agree to inflict the barbarous penalty of death upon any species of heretics, not only without his concurrence in so strong a measure, but even contrary to his judgment and wishes.

Still, this is but conjecture, against the positive declaration of Zuingle,—that he pressed the senate to be gentle with the anabaptists.

3. Let us then attend to the manner in which this eminent reformer himself, without the least disguise or hesitation, recounts the circumstances under which

the senate of Zurich decreed the penalty in question.

Speaking of the solemn conference, mentioned in page 701, he says, " AFTER THAT CONFERENCE, which was indeed the tenth, besides many others both public and private, our very RENOWNED senate decreed, that, " whoever should re-baptize any person, should himself be drowned in water." " I may perhaps tire you, good reader," continues he, " with this long account, but I am not influenced by heat or party spirit, or any other motive than that of a faithful vigilance and solicitude for the churches. Many of our brethren, before they knew what sort of men we had to do with, were disposed to think they had been treated inhumanly throughout; but now since their own congregations have suffered devastations from the same people, they own that all they had heard of them, was very much short of the truth. . . . . Indeed, I believe the whole world never before experienced a hypocrisy of this sort." Now,

Is it possible that Zuingle should have expressed himself in this manner, concerning the senate of Zurich, and their inhuman treatment of the unhappy enthusiastic anabaptists, unless he had been actually approving, consenting to, and probably recommending that cruel edict, which all the enlightened members of the church of Christ must for ever condemn? Further, be it observed that,

4. The SOLEMN CONFERENCE of the contending parties, which was soon followed by this violent decree of the senate, commenced on the sixth of November, 1525. Whereas it was in the former part of the same year, that the Swiss reformer pleaded with the magistrates in favor of the Anabaptists. And then,

With these facts in view, the discerning reader will have no difficulty in drawing for himself the just inferences. He will see, that between the month of May, and the conclusion of the conference in the succeeding November, the anabaptists became so abominably outrageous, that the patience of Zuingle was absolutely exhausted; and that, therefore, there is in the accounts, no inconsistency which either can at all impeach the veracity of the reformer, or materially affect the accuracy of the Dutch historian. For the honor of the reformation, I would it were in my power to clear the memory of the former from the imputation of an intolerant spirit, which led that great man to approve of capital punishments for no other offence except the mere act of rebaptization!!

In estimating, however, both the magnitude and the number of the persecutions which the anabaptists of those times underwent, great care is required, not to confound the punishments inflicted on such as were proved guilty of tumult and sedition with the severe hardships and heavy penalties, which many of them certainly suffered on account of harmless practices, or even mere errors of judgment in articles of faith.

The several edicts of the senate of Zurich, issued during the rise of the anabaptists, sufficiently manifest the spirit of those legislators. By the first, a penalty of two guilders, was set upon all such as should suffer themselves to be rebaptized, or should withhold baptism from their children; and it was further declared, that those who opposed this order should be yet more severely treated. By the second, we have seen the punishment of anabaptism was made capital.

Predestination.

It is a common, at the same time, an erroneous notion, that the difference of the sentiments of Luther from those of all that class of protestants on the continent, who had no connexion with HIS churches, lay very much in the article of PREDESTINATION. There is a two-fold mistake in this position, originating, I conceive, in an inattention to those variations of doctrine, which in the subsequent periods of the history of the reformation, took place both in the Lutheran and the other churches that separated themselves from the Romish communion. Certainly the Lutheran churches by degrees became more Arminian, and, in general, the rest of the protestant churches more Calvinistic afterwards; but in truth, consubstantiation was the single point in the early part of the reformation, on which the unhappy separation almost entirely turned; and the consequences of this schism deserve to be noticed by pious reformers in all ages, as a warning to bury in silence their unimportant disagreements rather than to perpetuate them by a formal and explicit contention.

Ulrick Zuingle was the founder of those reformed churches, which held no communion with the Lutherans; and on a careful perusal of his voluminous writings, I am convinced, that certain peculiar sentiments, afterwards maintained by Calvin, concerning the absolute decrees of God, made no part of the theology of the Swiss reformer; and this observation may serve to correct one part of the two fold-mistake mentioned.

The Saxon theologian, though he denied, as we have repeatedly seen, the existence of all human ability to save a lost sinner, as also the inefficacy of all human qualifications to merit reward; and though he ascribed salvation to grace alone, and to the merciful will of God, yet on the delicate question of predestination, ever displayed that moderation by which his mind was uniformly influenced in all doctrinal inquiries *except one**; and, content with what scripture had revealed he never undertook to explain this difficult subject with any thing like a systematic precision: much less did he ever think proper to propose the arduous speculations concerning the Divine decrees as necessary articles of a christian's faith.

It happened, however, that a neighboring minister, with the view of comforting one of his flock, whose mind was much distressed respecting the secret counsels of God, was desirous of obtaining from Luther more satisfaction on this head than could be collected from his publications. This circumstance gave to our reformer the occasion of writing an epistle, the substance of which will be allowed by all sincere protestants to be well adapted to the purpose for which it was composed; and as a curious and inquisitive spirit of prying into the inscrutable mysteries of the Divine will, is but too often indulged by many serious persons the perusal of a few quotations from Luther's advice may prove edifying to some evangelical readers.

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* Consubstantiation.

"Many have perished in the indulgence of such curious inquiries; it is a temptation which leads even to blasphemy. I myself, by giving way to it, have more than once been reduced to the last extremity. We, poor mortals, by faith can scarcely comprehend a few rays of the Divine promise, or receive in practice a few sparks of the Divine precepts; and yet, feeble and impure as we are, we rashly attempt to fathom the majesty of God in all its brightness. Do we not know that his ways are past finding out? Instead of using well the mild light of the promises which is adapted to our faculties, we rush with eyes of moles, to view at once the majestic splendor of the Deity. What wonder then if his glory should overwhelm us in the attempt to investigate it! We ought to know that there is such a thing as the secret will of God: but the danger is when we attempt to comprehend it. I am wont to check myself with that answer of Christ to Peter, who had asked what was to become of John;—"What is that to thee? follow thou me." But suppose we could give an accurate account of the judgments of Almighty God in his secret determinations: what advantage would accrue to us from such knowledge, beyond what lies open to us from the promises and the precepts; from the former addressed to our faith; from the latter to our practice? Tell your friend, if he would have peace of mind, to abstain from such intricate speculations. The subject is incomprehensible, and the study of it may drive him to despair and blasphemy. Let him not give way to Satan, who would weary him out, by presenting impossibilities to his mind. Let him exercise faith in the promises, and obey the commandments; and when he has discharged those duties well, he will be able to judge whether he will have any time left for impossibilities.—There is no other remedy than to neglect, and not give way to such thoughts; though this is a difficult task, because Satan suggests the absolute necessity of attending to them. This battle however must be fought;

and many persons fail in the contest by not suspecting their thoughts to be the temptations of Satan; whereas, these are the very fiery darts of *that wicked one.* He himself fell from heaven by aiming at a knowledge above his station. Thus also he vanquished Adam, by teaching him to be dissatisfied with his ignorance concerning the will of God Flight is the true wisdom here; there is no room for Christ to dwell in the heart, as long as reasonings of this kind are uppermost." In another letter, while he admits the preordination and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, from Ezek. xviii. 23, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God," he argues, that God chose and seriously decreed from eternity, the possibility of the salvation and everlasting happiness of all men. And hence he concludes that the general promises of a gracious God, ought by no means to be limited; nor those suggestions of Satan to be indulged, which would separate us from the Divine mercy, which is represented in scripture as infinite. He then refers the afflicted penitent to the voice of God himself, "This is my beloved Son, hear him; and to the words of Christ, proclaiming in the streets, "Come unto me, all ye that labor." He invites all, even the very worst, as publicans and harlots. Why should we perplex ourselves with difficult, and circuitous roads, when the direct road is so clearly pointed out to us in the gospel.

Conference at Marpurg.

"In the cause of religion every subdivision is a strong weapon in the hand of the enemy." The zealous landgrave of Hesse was so sensible of the importance of this maxim, that he spared no pains to unite the Lutheran and Zuinglian protestants, and make them act in concert against the common enemy. In effect, the unhappy disagreement of these sects, was not only injurious to the reformation in general, but also thwarted very much the military views of this active and magnanimous prince.

For the purpose of promoting so desirable a union, the landgrave, in the year 1529, proposed a friendly conference to be held at Marpurg between the heads of the two denominations. Thither repaired, on the one side, Luther and Melancthon, on the other, Zuingle and Oecolampadius, together with several others, their friends, respectively, and men of great note. It is unnecessary to detail the particulars of the conferences which lasted several days. Suffice it to say, they ended rather according to what might have been expected, than according to the christian wishes of the good landgrave of Hesse. It was not probable that either Zuingle or Luther, in a public disputation on the nature of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, should retract the sentiments which he had long defended, and against which he would hear no argument advanced, but what he had already repeatedly heard, well considered, and, in his own judgment, satisfactorily answered. It appears that Luther, conscious of his own positive determination not to give way one hair's breadth on the point of consubstantiation, and also well aware of the steady character of the Swiss reformer, from the first clearly foresaw the event of the debates at Marpurg, and was induced to go there, only or chiefly, lest the adverse party should have to boast that they were more disposed than himself to adopt measures of peace and concord. The narratives of the party-historians concerning this business contain many bitter things, which are best passed over, especially as the sincerity of the motives of the controversialists cannot reasonably be doubted. We are bound however to mark with the most entire disapprobation, that unchristian stubbornness of temper which manifested itself in Luther at the conclusion of the conferences. The sacramentarians, as they were called, begged hard to be acknowledged as brethren. They even went so far, as to own repeatedly, that the body of Christ was verily present in the Lord's supper, though in a spiritual manner; and Zuingle himself, in pressing for mutual fraternity, declared with tears, that there were no men in the world with whom he more earnestly wished to agree, than with the Wittemberg divines. Even the landgrave personally exerted himself, with all his might, to produce a cordial friendship. But the spirit of Luther proved perfectly untractable and intolerant. Nothing more could be gained from him, than that each side should show Christian charity to the other as far as they could conscientiously; and that both should diligently pray God to lead them into the truth. To go further, Luther maintained, was impossible; and expressed astonishment, that the Swiss divines could look upon himself as a Christian brother, when they did not believe his doctrine to be true. In such circumstances, however, though there could be no such thing as fraternal union, the parties, he allowed, might preserve a friendly sort of peace and concord; might do good turns to each other, and abstain from harsh and acrimonious language.

The papal advocates, either through ignorance or design, represent Luther's opposition to the sacramentarians as founded in political reasons. Little need is there, by the addition of imaginary accusations, to aggravate the blamable conduct of our reformer in the discussions respecting consubstantiation. His reputation for sincerity in every part of his belief, is as completely unsullied as his pertinacity in the support of this particular article is altogether indefensible: and it is scarcely necessary to add, that mere human policy must have determined him to pursue measures the reverse of those which he actually adopted. To have been reinforced by the whole body of the Zuinglian protestants would have proved, at that time to the Lutherans, a most important accession of strength, and was an event very much dreaded by the Romanists.

In regard to Zuingle and his associates, it is by no means clear, that their excessive desire to be on good terms with the Lutherans, did not carry them a little too far in the concessions which they made at the conferences of Marpurg. It is true, that soon after those conferences, both sides published their own accounts of what had passed, and boasted, that they had gotten the better in the combat. However, as certain articles had been drawn up, and actually signed by Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, &c. on one side, and by Zuingle, Oecolampadius, Bucer, &c. on the other, this authentic record is a very useful document to the curious inquirer, who wishes to determine how far in fact each party strictly adhered to their real sentiments.

Melancthon's account is, that Zuingle readily gave up several things which he had advanced in his writings, particularly his notion of original sin; and that he came over to the Wittemberg divines in all points, the single article of the Lord's supper excepted.

Luther, on his return home from Marpurg, expresses himself much pleased with the moderation of the Zuinglians, and their disposition to concede. From what had passed, however, he judged, that besides the question on the Lord's supper, there was not a perfect agreement in the article of original sin. In fact, the fourth article of the Marpurg concord, which treats of this doctrine, is penned with some ambiguity; and in such matters Luther's eye was infinitely more penetrating than Melancthon's.

Bucer acknowledges, that as there was a definitive disagreement between the parties respecting the sacrament, himself and his friends, from a desire of peace and harmony, had been induced to sign the other articles, though they were not expressed with that precision with which they would have been, if the Helvetian theologians had drawn up their own creed.

Lastly, a modern author, though strongly prejudiced on the side of the sacramentarians, owns that the Marpurg articles of concord are conceived in such terms as neither Zuingle nor Oecolampadius had ever used before, and that that circumstance leads to a belief, that Zuingle and Oecolampadius did not adhere to their former sentiments. He then proceeds to say, that " these divines, with the view of uniting the protestants, agreed to sign a formulary, which, according to their own way of interpreting the meaning of the words, did not contradict their real sentiments, but which, however, in fact was entirely the creed of Luther. The motive was good, but full of danger. Luther was more politic than he appeared to be."

Without pretending to determine which side of the two was more politic, I may now safely leave it to the diligent student of ecclesiastical history, to reflect on the evidence before him, and determine for himself, which was more HONEST and SINCERE.

In this place it may not be improper to mention briefly some of the peculiar opinions of the great Swiss reformer.

In less than a twelvemonth after the conferences at Marpurg, Melancthon, in the year 1530, then present at the memorable diet of Augsburg, wrote to Luther in substance as follows. "Zuingle has sent hither in print his confession of faith. You would say neither more nor less, than that he is not in his senses. On original sin and the use of the sacraments, he clearly revives his old errors. On the nature of the ceremonies he talks like a Swiss; that is, most barbarously. At one stroke he would abolish all ceremonies; and he would have no bishops: then he presses most vehemently to obtain his favorite article on the Lord's supper."

Let us now turn to that confession itself of Zuingle, which called forth this harsh censure from the mild, pacific, candid Melancthon.

1. On *original sin*, he speaks to this effect: Sin is properly a transgression of a law; and "where there is no law, there is no transgression." Our great ancestor sinned; but *which of us* meddled with the forbidden fruit? There is then no denying that original sin, as it exists in us the descendants of Adam, is *not properly sin.* It is a disease; it is a condition. It may be called sin, but it is not so in strictness of speech.—Thus a perfidious enemy when taken in war may *deserve* to be made a slave. His children also become slaves, but the fault was in the father. The children are not to blame; yet they suffer for the sin of their father; and if you choose to denominate their state of slavery *sin*, because by sin they were brought into that

state, I shall not object. It is however in this sense that we are by nature the children of wrath.

2. The *sacraments*, he affirms, do not confer grace, but are public testimonies given to the church, of the previous existence of grace.

3. He allows, that such *ceremonies* as are not founded in superstition, nor are contrary to the word of God, may be tolerated, till the Day-star shall become more and more bright; but that even these had better be abolished, provided it can be done without giving great offence.

4. He grants there ought to be MINISTERS of the word to instruct the people, and to comfort, and to alarm them, also to baptize and to celebrate the Lord's supper; but as to the whole tribe of mitred bishops, he looks on them as born to consume the fruits of the earth; and to be in the church of Christ, precisely what wens and swellings are in the human body.

5. Zuingle's ideas concerning princes and magistrates merit peculiar attention. They are to be obeyed, says he, when they discharge their offices with wisdom and justice. But should they abuse their authority, in that case, if the tyrant was legally appointed, the Christian must obey him till he has an opportunity of putting in practice St. Paul's rule, "If thou mayst be free, use it rather." The opportunity however, should, I think, be clearly pointed out by God, and not by man; as clearly, for example, as when Saul was rejected to give place to David.

The two grand instruments of the reformation on the continent, during the period which we are now reviewing, were undoubtedly Zuingle and Luther; and the pious student of their history has now before him, I conceive, sufficient materials, whereby to judge for himself of their integrity, their talents, and their DEFECTS. On the authority of the learned translator of Mosheim, I had imagined for many years that Zuingle, "instead of receiving instruction from Luther, was much his superior in learning, capacity, and judgment, and much fitter to be his master than his disciple." Beausobre, I own, was the first who induced me to suspect this representation; not, however, by opposing the sentiments of Maclane, but by supporting them with numerous instances of blind partiality towards Zuingle, and not a few most uncandid and even abusive censures of Luther. To point out simply the prepossessions of historians who have so many opportunities of directing the sentiments of mankind, must be deemed a just and commendable precaution for the protection of truth; but to aim at conjectures respecting the causes of their prepossessions may seem invidious and unnecessary. On historical questions, however, where pure religion is concerned, one may be allowed, perhaps, to make general observations of great practical consequence; such as, 1st, That men of LITTLE OR NO RELIGION, rarely, or never judge fairly in such questions; and therefore a believer is not to expect an equitable sentence from infidels, sceptics, or atheists: And 2dly, That persons who profess some sort of belief in the gospel, and have yet very erroneous views of its doctrines, are usually possessed with strong prejudices against those who hold the faith in orthodox purity and simplicity. For, till the human heart be effectually humbled by God's grace to receive the gospel terms of reconciliation with thankfulness and submission of soul, it always harbors an unhappy opposition to the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus; that is, it remains ignorant of God's righteousness, and, like the Jews, going about to establish their own righteousness, it does not submit to the righteousness of God. The effect of such erroneous views is, that these nominal Christians, not only oppose the DOCTRINE to which they have not yet been brought to submit, but also thoroughly dislike, and are violently prejudiced against all those who receive it and value it as the one thing needful. This is the true key for understanding rightly a thousand prepossessions, aversions, and misrepresentations which we meet with in authors, and which on any other ground are utterly unaccountable.

I need not dissemble that numerous passages in the writings of Beausobre, convince me that he is no very warm advocate for the great protestant doctrine of justification by faith. In one place, for example, upon a strong declaration by Melancthon, recorded in his own hand writing, respecting the importance of that Christian article of doctrine, which asserts the efficacy of the merits of Christ without human works, he ventures to suggest that the passage was PERHAPS Luther's; and he afterwards adds, that one may hence learn how OBSTINATELY they were at that time attached to the doctrine of justification by faith. I scarcely need observe, that those who hold this precious article of faith in the sense which Luther held it, and in which the church of England now holds it, never speak of it in this manner.

From Melancthon's report of the conferences at Marpurg, I collect, that it was one of the first public objections of Luther to Zuingle, that the Swiss reformer and his adherents were not accustomed, in their religious instructions, to say much concerning the scriptural method of justification; which, as Luther maintained, rendered it probable, that the peculiar and essential doctrine of the gospel was hardly known to them. On the whole, I believe, all dispassionate judges will be disposed to allow that these researches fully warrant the following conclusions.

1. That the sacramental controversy did no good to Zuingle's temper, and much harm to Luther's.

2. That in the heat and haste of contention, Zuingle sometimes sank the efficacy both of baptism and of the Lord's supper below the true scriptural standard, and represented them as mere tokens or badges of Christian society and connexion. Bucer, his own friend and advocate, whose testimony is therefore decisive, expressly allows this. Let us however, in one instance hear Zuingle himself. "You have celebrated the Lord's supper; therefore you belong to the society of Christians." "The cup which we use in giving thanks, what is it else, but a mark of our society and connexion?" In other places he represents the Lord's supper, as implying nothing but a mere "COMMEMORATION;" which at best is a loose and ambiguous way of speaking.

3. That Zuingle in the article of original sin, probably was never completely orthodox, and that in regard to the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith, though he seems always to have admitted it distinctly in theory, yet he by no means made that practical use of it which Luther and his disciples did. In effect, his time and thoughts were for years, almost entirely taken up with the sacramental controversy, and with disputes respecting baptism. On the contrary, Luther, though harrassed with controversy beyond example, appears to have lived every hour of his life "by faith on the Son of God." The great doctrine of justification appears uppermost in all his voluminous writings: it was the support of his own soul in all his troubles; and we find him constantly inculcating it from the press and the pulpit, in all his conversations, and in his most private letters. This part of the religious character of Luther is not relished by many. They suppose he carried his notions too far.

4. That on the duties of Christian subjects, and also on questions relative to ecclesiastical polity, there was a still greater difference between the Saxon and the Helvetian reformers. Obey and suffer, was Luther's motto in general; whereas the obedience of Zuingle, we have seen, hung on a very slender thread.

Both these champions of the reformation passed much of their lives in the midst of active, tumultuous, perilous scenes; and both of them met with great provocations from the anabaptists. What room could there be for the private, tranquil exercises of religion; or even, for the study and practice of pastoral care and instruction? It happens, however, that the writings of Luther abound in these things. His devotion never flags. Ever aware of the wiles of Satan, and well skilled in the use of Christian armor, his dependance both for himself and his people is always and altogether on the grace of God; yet his vigilance in superintending the Saxon churches is as incessant as if their spiritual improvement depended on himself. The comparison in this point, grounded on documents in existence, is unquestionably very much to the advantage of the Saxon reformer.

There was that in Martin Luther, which required great and magnificent objects, attended with difficulties, dangers, and perplexities, to call forth those exertions of wisdom, courage, and perseverance, for which he is so justly celebrated. I may add, also, my entire conviction that internal trials and distress of mind greatly improved his character; they made him a more humble Christian, and a more skilful adviser in spiritual things; and if Zuingle had experienced a similar afflictive discipline, though perhaps he did not stand in need of that chastisement so much as Luther did, I suppose we should have heard abundantly more of his personal sufferings and lamentations on account of the deceitfulness of sin, the delusions of Satan, the workings of inward corruptions, and above all, of those hidings of God's face and that darkness of soul, which the most godly persons always represent as their grievous and intolerable calamity.

CHAPTER X.

A Concise View of the Condition of the Protestants a little before the Diet of Spires.

1. Persecutions.—2. Rupture between Charles V. and the Pope.—3. Diet of Spires in 1529.—4. Protest of the Reformers.—5. Meetings of the Protestants.—6. Diet of Augsburg.

THE progress of Divine knowledge, the genuine conversion of souls, and the abolition of abominable superstitions, were carried on with no great interruption for the space of ten years, and upwards; that is, till the year 1529, reckoning from the year 1517, when Luther, unable to smother his indignation, first raised his voice against Tetzel, the impudent vender of indulgences, and at the same time pointed out the Roman pontiff himself as the leading culprit in that iniquitous traffic. The success of the gospel, if we except the apostolic age, was perhaps in this period unexampled. Even in Italy, in a town called Fayenza, we are told by father Paul, that there was public preaching against the church of Rome, and that protestantism increased every day.

1. *Persecutions.*

We are however not to forget, that notwithstanding the blessed influence of the written word, persons, who openly avowed their convictions of the truth, were miserably exposed to persecution in all those places where either the civil or the ecclesiastical ruler happened to be an active and zealous Roman catholic. The catalogue of the sufferers is very considerable. It may however suffice to add, to the instances already noticed at page 689, a few others of the most remarkable cases.

In 1527, a Bohemian woman, after a confinement of almost a whole year, was cast into the flames, on account of two crimes laid to her charge.

1. That by denying the corporeal presence of Christ's natural body, she had blasphemed the sacrament of the altar.

2. That she had been rebaptized by John Kalens. The wooden cup which Kalens had used in the administration of the Lord's supper, was burnt along with this heretic.

Sometimes the evangelical preachers, when proscribed by papal cruelty, fled from their habitations to save their lives. There is on record an admirable consolatory letter of Oecolampadius, written in 1528, to two persons of this sort then in exile. "It would move a heart of adamant," says he, "my dear brethren, to think of your flocks thus deprived of their faithful shepherds, dispersed and exposed to the wolves: then to see the adversaries triumphing and glorying in their iniquity; and the weaker brethren, who were on the very eve of renouncing popery, suddenly alarmed, and apprehensive of a similar treatment. Add to this, the dangers, the ignominy, the distresses of exile, which are sometimes more grievous than death itself. For, exiles undergo a daily death. However, when we reflect that God is faithful, and will not tempt us above what we are able to bear, but will regulate every thing according to the strength which he is pleased to give, this consideration supplies an abundance of substantial consolation. Be assured, the Holy Ghost, who has anointed you for this contest, will not fail to preserve you from fainting in the afflictions which ye undergo for the truth. Moreover, your silence during your proscription, speaks louder by much to the hearts of God's children, than ever your most animated sermons could do. Your present firmness fixes an inviolable seal on the doctrines you have been teaching with so much piety. The blood of Abel has a voice; and so has your persecution a tongue. Away then with cowardice and lamentation. Happy the man who is conformed to the image of the crucified Savior, whom we preach. Christ knows his sheep; he will preserve them from the jaws of the wolf; and the exultation of the hypocrites will be but for a moment."

Joachim, the elector of Brandenburg, distinguished himself at this time in persecuting the Lutherans.—This bigoted prince had confined for some days in her chamber, on account of her attachment to the gospel, his own wife Elizabeth, the sister of the aforementioned exiled king of Denmark; and was intending to immure her perpetually; when by the help of her brother, she effected a wonderful escape from Berlin; was conveyed in the waggon of a peasant, and hospitably received by the elector of Saxony.

The duchess of Munsterberg, also, named Ursula, had this year a most miraculous escape from the monastery of Friburg; and fled with two virgins to Luther for protection. This was a most mortifying event to George of Saxony; for this duchess was his own cousin.

In France, the persecutions were dreadful. The papists persuaded the king, that all the misfortunes with which the country was afflicted, were owing to the mischievous Lutheran heresy. In consequence, the most sanguinary laws were solemnly decreed against Lutheranism, and every one who could be proved to favor the doctrine, was treated as a blasphemer. Yet this same prince, Francis I. notwithstanding the zeal with which his catholic clergy availed to inspire him, had no objection, for the purpose of more effectually serving his political schemes, to endeavor by the medium of his ambassadors, to promote in Switzerland that very reformation of religion, which he was laboring to expel from his own kingdom by fire and sword. Zuingle, in a letter to Oecolampadius tells us, that the royal ambassadors of France pressed the five catholic cantons of Switzerland to allow the word of God to be preached among them, according to the system of the reformers.

In North Holland, a widow, named Wendelmut, was seized on account of her religion, carried to the Hague, and there strangled, and afterwards burnt to ashes. On her examination concerning the mass, she answered, "It was a piece of bread;" and in regard to the images and pictures of saints, she confessed she knew of no other mediator but Jesus Christ. To one that told her, she did not fear death because she had not tasted it, this widow replied, "I shall never taste it; for Christ has said, If any man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." She was then advised to confess her sins to a priest; upon which she cried aloud, "I have confessed all my sins to Christ my Lord, who takes away all sin. But if I have offended my neighbors, I heartily ask their forgiveness." She then went to the place of execution with meekness and courage.

It is said, that some of the Moravian brethren, as well as other pious persons of those times, were baptized a second time; and this, not as proselytes of anabaptism, but merely because they could then see no other way of separating themselves from a wicked world. And we may observe in general, that it is not always easy to distinguish, in the accounts of the anabaptist martyrs, who were truly humble Christians. We cannot however doubt of the REALITY of the sufferings of the unfortunate victims, when the facts are distinctly recorded with triumph by the Romish historians themselves. On this ground it is, that I select from Cocklæus—who otherwise is rarely to be trusted in any question respecting the reformers—the following testimonies of the execrable barbarity of the papists. "At Rotenberg by the river Neckar," says this fiery zealot, "many of the anabaptists, both men and women, were apprehended; and all put to death who refused to recant their errors. Nine men were burnt: Ten women were drowned. But their leader and teacher, Michael Sellarius, an apostate monk, who was by far the greatest offender, was condemned in a public court of judicature, to have his blasphemous tongue cut out by the executioner; to be tied to a curricle, and to have two pieces of his flesh torn from his body in the market-place, by red hot pincers;—then to be torn again afterwards in the same manner by the hot pincers five times on the road, as he was dragged to the burning pile." This sentence, the author tells us, was executed on the 17th of May, 1527: and he proceeds to exclaim what a grievous deceiver Sellarius had been; and among other things mentions his teaching of the people not to invoke saints; but not one word escapes this malignant and bigoted historian, concerning the firmness, patience, or piety of the martyr.

At Tournay, in Flanders, in 1528, an Augustine monk, named Henry, was condemned to the flames, for having thrown off his dress, married a wife, and preached against popery. The bishop's official told him, he might save his life, if he would but own that the woman he had married was his concubine. But he, refusing to lengthen his days on such terms, praised God by singing Te Deum, and soon after cheerfully finished his course in the fire.

2. *Rupture between Charles V. and the Pope.*

Notwithstanding these dreadful narratives which sufficiently demonstrate the cruel and unrelenting hostility of the papal hierarchy, there is no doubt but the violence of the war between Francis I. and the emperor, as also the dissensions between the emperor and the pope, proved extremely favorable to the progress of the reformation. For though the spirit of persecution was not in the least abated, yet it spent its chief fury on such defenceless individuals as happened to fall into the cruel hands of some bigoted ruler, ecclesiastic or civil. The three potentates above mentioned were themselves beset with too many difficulties in their political affairs to give much serious and steady attention to the business of religion. Add, that their respective interests were often so opposite and perplexed, as entirely to exclude all amicable concurrence in the formation of any general plan for the extirpation of heresy. In effect, it is by reflecting on these jarring interests, with an overruling Providence constantly in the mind, that we are enabled in some measure to account not only for the mild decree of the diet of Spires in 1526, but also for the inefficiency of the succeeding attempts of the great papal powers to stifle the revival of Christian truth and liberty. The pope, no doubt, was sincere in his desires to crush every symptom of growing protestantism, but Charles V. had neither leisure nor inclination to gratify the wishes of a pontiff who had so lately entered into an alliance against him with the French and the Venetians. The religion of this prince, as far as it was real, is supposed to have been Roman catholic ; but whatever it was, he never suffered it to interfere with his ambitious schemes of secular aggrandizement. Even the pope himself ceased to have the least influence with him, the moment the politics of the court of Rome appeared to thwart those of his imperial majesty. On the other hand the principles of Clement VII. were in no degree better. Under the pretence that hard and unjust terms had been extorted from the king of France while a prisoner in Spain, Clement at once absolved him from the oath by which he was bound to execute the treaty of Madrid, and sent a person both to congratulate him on his deliverance from captivity, and to settle a treaty against Charles ; and lastly, he despatched a brieve to the emperor, full of accusation, invective, and menace.

This proceeding of Clement VII. inflamed the resentment of the emperor to such a degree, that he abolished the authority of the Roman pontiff throughout all his Spanish dominions, made war upon him in Italy, laid siege to Rome, and blocked up Clement himself in the castle of St. Angelo, where he was reduced to the extremity of feeding on asses' flesh, and at length compelled to capitulate on severe terms, and to remain a prisoner until the chief articles were performed.

Such in brief were the important consequences of that confederacy which has been termed the HOLY LEAGUE, because the pope was at the head of it. The DETAIL of the war we leave to the secular historians, having no concern with victories or defeats, diminutions or extensions of empire; or with the ambitious plans and schemes that produce them, any further than as these things frequently affect the interests of the gospel, lay open the secret motives of the principal actors, and thereby explain a number of circumstances otherwise utterly inexplicable, in the history of the church of Christ.

Therefore, with these objects in view, we judge it expedient to give some account of two memorable letters, which the emperor thought fit to write, one of them to the pope himself, the other to his cardinals, at Rome, before he came to an absolute rupture with Clement VII.

1. In the former, he accuses the pope of ingratitude, putting him in mind that it was by his assistance he had been raised to the pontifical chair. "The king of England," he said, "had been called the PROTECTOR of the Holy League; whereas that monarch had assured him in his letters, that he neither had, nor would accept that title, though the pope had pressed him to do so. The king of France, moreover, made no scruple to own publicly, that before he returned from Madrid to his own country, he had been urged by the pope to enter into the new alliance; and the emperor added, that he knew the pope had absolved him from the oath by which he was bound, either to observe the articles of peace, or return to his captivity.

He then proceeds to put his holiness in mind, that the pope of Rome received more money from the subjects of his imperial highness, than from all the other kings of Christendom put together. That a judgment might be formed of the magnitude of those annual receipts from the hundred grievances which had been presented to his court by the Germanic body: that, as emperor, such had always been his devotion and reverence for the apostolic see, he had hitherto *forborne to listen to the complaints of his German subjects:* but that if, for good reasons he should be driven to withhold those revenues, then the pope would no longer possess the golden keys which open and shut the gates of war, he would no longer be allowed to carry on hostilities against the emperor with the money which belonged to the subjects of his imperial highness, for it would certainly be more just for the emperor to apply that money to the purposes of his own defence.

Charles V. then concludes, by roundly telling the pope, that if he was still determined to go on with the war, and would not listen to the reasons he had alleged, he should look upon him as acting not the part of a father, but of the head of a faction; not of a pastor, but of an invader of the just rights of sovereigns. This, he said, was his ultimatum, and he should appeal to a general council of the whole christian world.

2. In his letter addressed to the college of cardinals, Charles, with much parade, insists on the purity of his intentions, his great moderation, and continued endeavors to establish peace and tranquillity.—"How shocked then, and how disgusted," he said, "must any one be to read the brieve which had been delivered to him by the nuncio, and had the sanction of so eminent a pontiff and of so many pious and Christian fathers. It was evidently written for the express purpose of vilifying and degrading the emperor who was the protector of the apostolic see. It breathed nothing but war, sedition, false and injurious accusations against himself; and yet there was not any prince who so much respected the holy see, or defended its dignity with so disinterested a care. It was

his innate reverence for the Roman hierarchy, which had induced him, when he was at the diet of Worms, to turn A DEAF EAR to all the importunate complaints and petitions of the Germans. In effect, by the steps he had taken to serve the pope, he had in some measure alienated the minds of his German subjects, particularly by forbidding, under a heavy penalty, the intended assembly of the princes at Spires. He had prohibited that convention because he foresaw such a meeting would prove disadvantageous to the pope; and to soothe the minds of the princes under their disappointment, he had then given them hopes of having a general council in a short time. He had explained all these things with great care to the pope, and had admonished him to call a council. He concluded this address to the cardinals, with requesting them to concur with himself in putting Clement VII. in mind of his duty, and in exhorting him to preserve the peace of Christendom, which good purpose would be best effected by the convocation of a general council without further delay.

Then, if the pope should persist in refusing to hear reason, the emperor called on the cardinals themselves to come forward, and in their own name summon the council which was so much wanted. And lastly, if the reverend fathers should oppose his equitable requisition, he told them, he himself would not fail to use such remedies as God had put in his power, for the protection of religion and the tranquillity of Christendom.

Charles V. in his indignation against Clement, published these manifestos, and did every thing he could to give notoriety to his complaints. The German protestants also most industriously dispersed the same. And we need not wonder that such extraordinary documents should have been read with great eagerness. What could those who well remembered the emperor's solemn declarations, both at Worms, and on other occasions, against Lutheranism, now think of his religion or conscience, when they heard him confess that he had stopped his ears against the honest prayers of Germany, merely to please the pope? Who would scruple to say, that having betrayed the interests of his imperial subjects, he could in his own turn expect no better than to be betrayed by an unprincipled pontiff?

No more needs be said to convince thinking persons of the effects which must have been produced on the public mind by these manifestos of the emperor. Full as acrimonious and reproachful as the bitterest invectives of Luther, they not only emboldened men, after the example of Charles, to treat the pope with little reverence, but also lowered exceedingly the credit of the whole dominant ecclesiastical establishment, and of all its most strenuous supporters. The publication of them had in effect divulged a dangerous secret, by many indeed sufficiently known before, yet did it require extraordinary confidence in Charles, to make a public avowal, which in substance, though not in words, amounted to a confession "That reverence towards the pope was no more than an art of government covered with the cloak of religion." The disclosure of so much political manœuvre and defective morality did more than counterbalance all that he had hitherto done against the reformers, whose conduct, ever marked by ingenuousness and plain dealing, appeared a PERFECT CONTRAST to all this duplicity, artifice, and inconsistency.

If the contention and animosity of two such unprincipled potentates as the pope and the emperor, thus operated in 1526 at the diet of Spires to check the persecuting spirit of the Romanists, and to prevent any systematic attempt to extirminate the protestants, it required no great foresight to predict the lamentable consequences of their union or alliance. To their lasting shame be it recorded, that the moment a prospect opened for the accommodation of their own respective political differences, both Clement VII. and Charles V. concurred in wreaking their united vengeance on the defenders of the sacred cause of religion and liberty.*

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* The pope and Charles V. concluded a treaty of peace at Barcelona, June 20, 1529.

3. *Another Diet at Spires in 1529.*

The decree of the diet of Spires was equivalent to a toleration of Luther's opinions in all the states where those opinions were approved by their respective governors or magistrates; but in 1529 a new diet was assembled at the same place, when the said decree was, by a majority of suffrages, so far revoked, as to forbid all further propagation of novel opinions in religion. Those who had observed the execution of the edict of Worms, were ordered to continue the execution of it. Those who had changed their religious system, and could not without danger of sedition revert to the ancient usages, were to be quiet, and make no further innovation till the meeting of a council. The celebration of mass was not to be obstructed in any place whatever; and lastly, the anabaptists were proscribed in the severest terms, and made subject to capital punishments.

The motives of Clement in this business were sufficiently intelligible. A pope of Rome, in peace or in war, confined and starved in a castle, or reseated in the chair of St. Peter issuing brieves and bulls for the terror of christendom, never loses sight of his grand object, the maintenance of his supreme and despotic jurisdiction: well aware, that should that be in the least impaired, the whole edifice of the pontifical authority would be thereby at once endangered.

The precise views of Charles V. in urging the harsh decree of this diet, may admit of some doubt. Perhaps he thereby hoped to attach firmly to his interests, or at least to sooth and gratify the pope, whose sacred character he had lately insulted with so many indignities. Perhaps he held the new doctrines as leading to close and durable confederacies in Germany, which might eventually weaken the imperial authority. Or he might imagine, that a resolute, well timed, and rigorous exertion of authority, would prove useful both for the protection and extension of his prerogatives, several of which, he would naturally suppose, were not much relished by a bold and turbulent race of people, of whom almost one half had already revolted from the papal domination. These, it must be owned, are only conjectures; but we are SURE that the ambition of this prince was restless, insatiable, and constantly impelling him, both to narrow the power of the Roman see, and also to encroach on the liberties of his German subjects. He had abundantly satisfied his revenge in the late humiliation of Clement; yet he still menaced that pontiff with the prospect of an impending general council: and in regard to the Germans, he certainly looked on their domestic troubles and divisions as in the main extremely favorable to his arbitrary and despotic intention. This monarch was what the world calls a great politician; but not what the scripture describes as a good man. His understanding became vitiated by his inordinate thirst after dominion, and by his unexampled prosperity; insomuch, that notwithstanding all his natural good sense, and all his experience, he was frequently the dupe of his own intricate schemes and projects.

4. *Protest of the Reformers.*

Iniquitous as was the decree of the second diet of Spires, it would doubtless have been much more rigorous and oppressive, if Charles had not been still at war with the French and his inveterate rival Francis I. The recess of this diet is dated in April; and the peace of Cambray between the emperor and the king of France was not concluded till the succeeding August.

Fourteen imperial cities‡ with the elector of Saxony, the marquis of Brandenburg, the dukes of Lunenburg and the prince of Anhalt at their head, in firm but moderate language solemnly PROTESTED against the decree of the diet, as unjust and intolerable, and in every way calculated to produce discontent and tumult. Hence arose for the first time the denomination of PROTESTANTS,* an honorable appellation, which, not only in Germany, but other nations, is given to all those sects of Christians who renounce the superstitious Romish communion.

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‡ The names of the cities are, Strasburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Constance, Reutlingen, Windsheim, Meinengen, Lindaw, Kempten, Hailbron, Isna, Weissemberg, Nordlingen and St. Gal.

* This term, on account of its convenient use, has been frequently anticipated in the course of this history.

The protestant princes and protectors of the reformed churches were not satisfied with merely expressing their dissent from the decree of the diet; they also drew up all their grievances in form; and appealed to the emperor and to a future general council, or to a lawful Germanic council, and to all impartial judges. Lastly, they fixed upon ambassadors, whom they directed to lay all their proceedings before his imperial majesty. Charles had not been present at the late diet, but had received from his brother Ferdinand, who had there presided in his place, an exact account of all that passed; and having at length concluded a peace with France, was now in Italy on his road to Bologna.

The German ambassadors were introduced to him at Placentia, and there they executed their commission with a spirit and resolution worthy of the princes whom they represented. Nothing however could be more discouraging than the reception they met with from this haughty monarch, whose vain mind was now puffed up with a series of extraordinary successes.—By a message, delivered to the deputies three days before they were admitted into his presence, he admonished them to be brief in what they had to say; and on their introduction he repeated the same admonition. Afterwards, when he had heard their objections to the decree, and they had waited a full month for his answer, he told them, "that he exceedingly lamented their divisions; but nevertheless insisted on obedience to the decree which was passed for the purpose of putting an end to the mischievous sects of every description. He had written, he said, to the elector of Saxony and his associates, and had commanded them in conformity to their oaths, to obey the decree of the diet; and if they were refractory, he should be compelled, for the sake of example and good government, to punish such contumacy with severity. He asserted, that himself and the rest of the princes regarded the peace of their consciences and the salvation of their souls, as much as the protestants could do; and moreover, that he was also as desirous of a general council as they could be, though, said he, there would not be much occasion for it, provided the lawful decrees of the diet, especially that of Worms, were duly enforced."

On receiving this answer, the ambassadors produced the act of appeal, as it had been drawn up at Spires; but Charles's minister for some time refused to deliver it to his master; and afterwards when he had ventured to present that spirited memorial, the monarch's pride was so severely wounded by this instance of opposition to his will, that in a rage he ordered the German ambassadors to be put under an arrest for some days; and, on pain of death, neither to stir a foot from their apartments, nor write a line to the protestant princes.

5. *Meetings of the Protestants.*

The account of this contemptuous and violent procedure of Charles V. soon found its way to Nuremberg, and convinced the protestant party that it was high time for them to consult for their protection against a powerful potentate intoxicated with success, and irritated by opposition. Then, whatever hopes they might place in foreign assistance, it was plain that little was to be done without unanimity at home. The papal adherents had for a long time been well aware of this; and at the diet of Spires had employed two of their most able and artful agents, Eckius, and Faber bishop of Vienna, to exert their utmost efforts in widening the breach between the disciples of Luther and of Zuingle. On the other side, the good landgrave of Hesse, both at Spires and afterwards at Marpurg, exhausted all the means which human prudence could suggest, to bring about, if possible, between the contending parties, an accommodation of so much importance, in the present struggle for deliverance from the yoke of superstition and ecclesiatical despotism.

In effect, the heads of the protestants, even while they were in suspense respecting the emperor's answer to their embassy, were so much alarmed at the late decree of Spires, that for the wise purpose of enlarging and cementing a defensive confederacy, they had a solemn conference at Roth in the month of June; and, moreover, at Nuremberg they drew up certain articles of their intended alliance.

In the succeeding October they met again at Sultzbach; and upon hearing of the severe treatment of their ambassadors at Placentia, they again assembled about the end of November at Smalcald; and lastly once more at Nuremberg early in the January of the succeeding year, 1530.

All these deliberations, owing to the various and jarring sentiments of the deputies, failed of producing the desirable issue. However the sacramentarian dissention, exasperated by the incurable obstinacy of Luther, appears to have been the principal, though perhaps not the only obstruction to unanimity. The tender conscience of the elector of Saxony rendered this prince averse to a military confederacy, even of defence, which might seem formed in opposition to the legitimate government of the country. His scruples are well known to have originated from Luther, who a little before the convention at Smalcald, exhorted him in the strongest terms not to think of using force against the emperor in the defence of religion. In his arguments he was supported by Melancthon and Bugenhagius.

At Nuremberg, in January, the deputies had almost resolved to send a new and more respectable embassy to his imperial majesty; but the assembly was very thinly attended, and as it was understood that the emperor would soon summon another diet of all the Germanic princes and orders, they abandoned their first intentions, and contented themselves with coming to this ultimate resolution—that each state should deliberate for itself, and within the space of a month, transmit to the elector of Saxony its peculiar sentiment, in order that the protestants at so critical a juncture might act in concert both in regard to the common defence, and also the objects to be aimed at in the ensuing diet.

6. *Diet of Augsburg.*

Charles V. arrived at Bologna on the fifth of November, 1529, and on the thirty-first of January of the succeeding year, sent his mandatory letters into Germany for the purpose of summoning a general diet of the empire, to be held at Augsburg on the eighth day of April. At Bologna, on the twenty-fourth of February, his own birth-day, he was crowned with great pomp by the pope himself: with whom he continued to reside in the same palace till the following month of March.

During the winter months, these two mighty potentates had held many consultations concerning the state of religion in Germany, and the best methods of extirpating heresy; but their views were materially different. The pope dreaded nothing so much as general councils, which he represented as factious, and, at best, slow in their operation. The case, he said, was desperate, and required speedy and rigorous measures: The clemency of the emperor was ill-judged, and had in effect exasperated the spirit of rebellion; and it was now incumbent on him to support the church, and crush the heretics by force.—Charles, though at this time much disposed to gratify the pope, was convinced that his German subjects were not to be trifled with; and it is not improbable but he might feel some compunction for having lately exhibited so much unreasonable resentment in his insolent treatment of their ambassadors at Placentia.

Whether the mind of the emperor really revolted at the iniquitous suggestion of condemning the honest protestants unheard, and of putting an end at once to their political existence, it may be hard to say; certain it is, that in the conferences with the pope at Bologna, whatever approached in the least degree to moderation and impartiality, originated with Charles

V. and not with Clement VII. The pope and his whole party demonstrated by their activity in open persecution, and by their secret manœuvres which have since transpired, that they sighed for the universal destruction of protestantism. The emperor in his own judgment, there is reason to believe, deemed the convocation of a council to be the proper expedient at this season, but having peremptorily refused to comply with the sanguinary proposals of the pope, he was disposed so far to humor his holiness, as first to adopt a less offensive measure, namely, the appointment of a diet of the empire. A general council was the next thing to be tried; but it was agreed that without the most urgent necessity, recourse should not be had to a remedy, the mere mention of which filled the mind of Clement with the most harassing apprehensions; and in every event, Charles appears to have bound himself by an unequivocal promise, to use the most efficacious endeavors for the reduction of all the rebellious adversaries of the catholic religion.

Notwithstanding the disposition in which the emperor left Bologna, the pope had the precaution to appoint cardinal Campeggio not only as his own representative and plenipotentiary at the ensuing diet, but also as an honorary attendant on his imperial majesty during all his journey to Augsburg: and to secure still more effectually the pontifical interests, he dispatched P. Vergerio as his nuncio to Ferdinand in Germany, with secret instructions to consult with that prince, and strain every nerve to hinder the convocation of a council. Vergerio was a lawyer, and proved himself well qualified for the commission with which he was entrusted. He injured the Lutherans by every method he could devise. The exertions of the popish divines Eckius, Faber, and Cochlæus, might undoubtedly have been depended upon; but Vergerio thought it best to ensure their activity by munificent presents. This precious commissioner was likewise directed to gratify king Ferdinand, by informing him that the pope was ready to grant him, in support of the war against the Turks, both a contribution from the clergy of Germany, and also the gold and silver ornaments of the churches.

Thus did the Roman pontiff, with fire and sword in one hand, and artifice and corruption in the other, endeavor to extirpate the godly protestants; and meanwhile, with consummate hypocrisy, express the most ardent wishes for peace and harmony, and the restoration of gospel principles in the church of Christ.

John THE CONSTANT, the excellent elector of Saxony, was determined to procure for the protestants, if possible, a fair hearing at the diet of Augsburg. And with a view to prevent all loose and fugative discussion in a business of such immense importance, and also to enable any equitable judge to see distinctly all the leading points of religion, which had produced so many volumes of controversy, he wisely directed his Wittemberg divines to draw up in a narrow compass the heads of that religious system, which had produced the separation from the Romish communion. This, though an affair of considerable nicety, was presently effected by Luther. For the doctrines in question had already been digested into seventeen articles; and had been proposed, twice in the conferences at Sultzbach, and once in that at Smalcald, as the confession of faith to be agreed on by the protestant confederates. These seventeen articles, with little or no alteration, were delivered by Luther, at Torgaw, to the elector then on his road to Augsburg; and served as a basis for more orderly and elaborate composition, to be exhibited at the approaching diet.—For the execution of a work of so great moment, the protestant princes employed the elegant and accurate pen of Melancthon, the result of whose labors was a treatise, admired even by many of its enemies for its piety, learning, and perspicuity. This celebrated performance is well known under the title of the CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG.

The reformation, as we have seen, in spite of all the efforts of papal rage and malignity, had not ceased to spread and prosper throughout various districts. The great city of Strasburg, in the former part of 1529, could not, by all the remonstrances of the imperial regency, be deterred from adopting the bold resolution of abolishing the mass; moreover, Count Philip of Hanover, though menaced by a formidable opposition, introduced evangelical doctrine in the same year throughout his dominions. Many instances indeed of the martyrdom of godly men might be added to the several catalogues already given; but the good protestants were accustomed to these sufferings, and bore them with extraordinary patience and fortitude:* however, as soon as they heard of the deplorable issue of the diet of Augsburg, they justly concluded that the pope and the emperor had resolved on their entire destruction; and they looked on the publication of the new edict, which was in effect severer than that of Worms, as the signal for the commencement of more violent and barbarous persecutions, than any they had experienced before.

The diet of Augsburg in 1530, forms a sort of era in the history of the reformation; but at present we shall say no more concerning it, than—1. That the German princes, the magnanimous defenders of the sacred cause, assembled at Smalcald towards the end of the year, and there concluded a solemn alliance of mutual defence; and—2. That some of the most wise and pious of the protestant theologians, especially Melancthon, were so oppressed by the prospect of the calamities which threatened the afflicted church of Christ, that they were almost ready to abandon the contest, and give themselves up to melancholy and lamentation.

We will conclude with an observation or two on the conduct of Luther, about the time of this very critical conjuncture.

1. Before the diet of Augsburg, in the year 1529, while the tempest of persecution was lowering on the faithful, this indefatigable servant of God was employed in publishing his less and greater catechism, which

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* Sleidan mentions two learned divines, who were burnt at Cologne in 1529. And Ab. Scultet reports from a M. S. of Bullinger, that at Rothweil, an imperial city in Suabia, three hundred and eighty-five persons were driven into exile; for deserting the doctrines of the papacy.

at this day are treatises of authority in the Lutheran churches. In the preface to each, he deplores the ignorance of the people at large, and asserts, that those who know nothing of christian principles, ought not even to be called by their name. He expatiates on the utility of catechizing; recommends the frequent use of it to masters of families; cites his own example of attending to the first catechetical truths for the purpose of edification, notwithstanding the proficiency which, in a course of years, he might be supposed to have made; and observes, that daily reading and meditation, among many other advantages, has this, that a new light and unction from the holy Spirit is hence, from time to time, afforded to the humble soul. With such godly simplicity was Luther conversant in the gospel-practice; and so totally distinct was the spiritual understanding and improvement, which he desired to encourage in the church, from the mere theory of frigid theological disquisition. Perhaps no history since the days of the apostles, affords a more remarkable instance of the humility and condescension of a primary theologian, in stooping to the infirmities of the weak, and lowering himself to the most uncultivated minds, than is exhibited by the publication of these two catechisms.

In the same year, Luther accompanied Melancthon's commentary on the epistle of the Colossians, with a memorable eulogium on the author; in which he frankly declared, that he preferred the works of Melancthon to his own, and was more desirous that they should be read than any thing which he himself had composed. "I," says he, "am born to be a rough controversialist; I clear the ground, pull up weeds, fill up ditches, and smooth the roads. But to build, to plant, to sow, to water, to adorn the country, belongs, by the grace of God, to Melancthon."

It was a singular felicity of the infant church of Saxony, that its two great luminaries, exceedingly diverse as they were in temper and gifts, should have been constantly united in the bonds of a strict affection, which never seems to have admitted the least degree of envy or jealousy. Such is the light in which these two worthies are transmitted to posterity; most disinterested friends, whose sole object of contention was to excel each other in proofs of mutual regard!

2. It was in the low and desponding state of the protestant party—for example, after such a lamentable defeat as they had suffered at the diet of Augsburg, that the spirit and character of Luther was calculated to shine forth with peculiar lustre, and in its true and genuine colors. By his unwearied vigilance in superintending the reformed churches, and by his incessant attacks on the ecclesiastical corruptions and abuses, he had shown to demonstration, that great and continued successes had in no degree disposed him to be remiss; and he now stood forward to prove, that notwithstanding the late untoward events and the magnitude of the impending danger, he was neither depressed by a reverse of circumstances, nor intimidated by the menaces of an arm of flesh, nor worn out by the length and obstinacy of the contention.—In effect, this champion of evangelical truth always looked on the conflict in which he was engaged, as the proper concern of Almighty God, and on himself as a mere instrument in the righteous cause. His mind, deeply impressed with this conviction, remained serene and cheerful, and as vigorous as ever, for new attacks on antichrist, and for new combats with his unblushing advocates. He exhorted the princes never to abandon the great truths they had undertaken to support: comforted his dejected friends, and employed much time in private prayer.

At no period of his life was the weight and influence of Martin Luther more conspicuous than in 1530, when the religious differences seemed tending to an awful crisis. His fortitude was invincible; his zeal courageous and disinterested; and happily they were both tempered by an extraordinary degree of rational and fervent piety.*

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* One of Melancthon's correspondents describes Luther thus: "I cannot enough admire the extraordinary cheerfulness, constancy, faith and hope of this man, in these trying and vexatious times. He constantly feeds these good

affections by a very diligent study of the word of God. Then, not a day passes in which he does not employ in prayer at least three of his very best hours.—Once I happened to hear him at prayer. Gracious God! What spirit and what faith there is in his expressions! He petitions God with as much reverence as if he was actually in the Divine presence; and yet with as firm a hope and confidence, as he would address a father or a friend. 'I know,' said he, 'thou art our father and our God: therefore I am sure thou wilt bring to nought the persecutors of thy children. For shouldest thou fail to do this, thine own cause, being connected with ours, would be endangered. It is entirely thine own concern: We, by thy providence, have been compelled to take a part. Thou therefore wilt be our defence!'

"While I was listening to Luther praying in this manner at a distance, my soul seemed on fire within me to hear the man address God so like a friend, and yet with so much gravity and reverence; and also to hear him in the course of his prayer insisting on the promises contained in the Psalms, as if he was sure his petitions would be granted." Cœlest. I. 275. Com. de Luth. LXIX. 3.

The papal historian, Maimbourg, is so well convinced of Luther's great influence about the year 1530, that he breaks out in a rage in the following manner. "I will speak freely what I think. Charles V. was to blame that he did not order Luther to be seized, when he talked so audaciously before him at Worms. However, he may be excused on account of the SAFE CONDUCT he had granted him. But at Augsburg he ought to have compelled the elector of Saxony to give him up to justice, and no longer to protect a rebel, who was then proscribed by an imperial edict, and YET continued writing insolent tracts against the emperor himself. It was this neglect on the part of Charles which defeated all his endeavors to produce an agreement between the parties." Maimb. p. 180.

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☞ *At the time subscriptions were solicited for this work, it was proposed to be comprised in 700 pages, with a list of Subscribers' Names annexed; but as it has considerably exceeded that number of pages, they are necessarily omitted.*

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